

The Indian Struggle for Freedom

(through Western eyes)

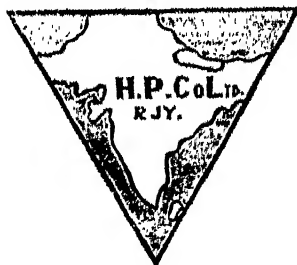
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Our Managing Director, Sjt. S. Subbasta collected all this information from the papers in 1932. He attempted to publish the same in a book-form at that time. On account of the dark shadow of ordinance that came over the Press then, the work was not taken up by any press, and the idea was kept idle for that time.

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In 1933 he collected some more information and added to it. A few months back he requested Dr. Bharatan Kumarappa to edit it in a book form. Dr. Bharatan Kumarappa complied with his request. As this book forms a historical document in Indian struggle for freedom this Company has great pleasure in publishing the same and placing it before the Public. This Company expresses its gratitude in this connection particularly to Dr. Bharatan Kumarappa for the great pains he has taken and the kind feeling he has shown for this Company and the concerning papers.

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The Indian Struggle for Freedom

(through Western eyes)



CHAPTER I

THE INDIA LEAGUE DELEGATION

[The India League is a body of men and women in England who have studied closely and sympathetically the Indian struggle for freedom. It counts among its ranks men like Prof. Harold Laski and Mr. Bertrand Russell. It sent out a delegation to India at the time of the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1932 to tour the country and report on conditions then prevailing. The Delegation spent a few months travelling the length and breadth of the country, visiting more especially the rural areas. Ed.]

1. Statement by the Secretary of the Delegation :

The following statement was issued on behalf of the India League Delegation by the Secretary, Mr. Krishna Menon, Member of the Delegation, whose members are Miss Ellen Wilkinson, Miss Monica Whately, Mr. Krishna Menon and Mr. Leonard W. Matters.

“We were sent to this country in August last by the India League in London to ascertain at first-hand the state of affairs and opinion in this country. During our brief stay here we have travelled widely all over British India. From Bombay where we landed we went to Poona and then to Madras. We travelled in

the Tamil, Malayalam, Canarese, and Telugu areas of the southern presidency. From Madras we proceeded northwards through Orissa into Bengal and parts of Assam and continued our tour through Birar and the United Provinces to Delhi. The Punjab, the N.-W. F. P., Sind and Gujerat were next visited. To finish our work within the time at our disposal we had to split ourselves into two and even to three and four sections.

In each of these provinces the Delegation spent the greater part of its time in the rural areas. In the urban areas we met leaders and representatives of almost every shade of opinion in India, official and non-official. Our work has been carried on with as little formality as possible. We have constantly reminded ourselves that statistics and memoranda by themselves would not give us the picture of real India that we were seeking, and that an understanding of the feelings and sentiments of the people was of the essence of our work. We stayed almost invariably in Indian houses with Indian hosts. Our hosts, guides and friends were not all of one religious or political persuasion. In every province and nearly every district we took care to see the officials who gave us their point of view.

When we left England we had been told that the policy of the present Viceroy and Secretary of State was a success and that the Congress movement was all but crushed. We were further told that the agitation for self-government was confined to a minority of educated Hindus who exploited the ignorant masses and

the unemployed young intelligentsia. We were also asked to expect to see a Muslim India at war with the rest of the country and standing loyalty by British Raj.

APPALLING POVERTY

In towns and cities we came across a variety of diverse opinion. The differences amongst sections appeared largely to centre round the question of the distribution of power among them under Swaraj. In the desire for Self-Government and in the opposition to repression and Ordinances there was unity. This unanimity has made a deep impression on us. We also came across Indians who echoed the official views and repeated official phrases. Every section but this has ceased to believe in the "bona fides" of the British and Indian Governments. This absence of any confidence in Britain was specially marked in the case of moderate men who had held responsible positions under Government.

The differences amongst sectional leaders with regard to details did not prevent them telling us that the Congress was the strongest political party in the country, it would win hands down in any free election, and that without its co-operation no constitution can be worked satisfactorily. Even officials shared this view.

In the villages we saw the India of the masses of her people. We are appalled at the poverty of the Indian villager. The Indian village is the home of stark want. Go where you like in India, it is the same

story of crushing taxation rackrenting uneconomic agriculture, indebtedness, illiteracy and starvation. In some villages we saw a post office and a District Board School which in normal times are the only evidence of "British Raj" in the village. To-day under the Ordinances police, special, punitive, plain clothes, officers and men are a feature of these villages. We found in the most inaccessible villages, armed police, police encampments and an altogether excessive display of the coercive power of Britain.

AWARE

The Indian villager, in our experience, believed the stories about him that are so common. He is not apathetic nor is he ignorant (though illiterate). He is fully aware of his plight and its economic and political causes. He is no admirer of the "British Raj". He knows that the fight for "Swaraj" has to be carried on till it is won. He looks on the Congressman as his friend. Indeed in these villages a Congressman or volunteer is always welcome; every house except that of Government loyalists is open to him and he retains the affection of the people.

CONSCIOUS PARTNERS

The Indian village is a homogeneous unit. It has a voice which covers Hindu and Mussalman, and a farmer and labourer. It is prepared to fight, and suffer or make compromise as a whole. The subtle arguments

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and the distinctions which obsess the town politician do not agitate the villager. The womenfolk, old and young, particularly in Hindu areas, are conscious partners in the awakening of the village and it is this that lends to the resistance put up by the village much of its strength. The village, again, supplies the Congress movement with much of its fighting material, and its tenacity of purpose is very great.

It is often stated in England that the masses of the Indian people who are villagers are unaffected by the Ordinances. Our experience challenges this assertion. Punitive police for which the villagers have to pay, special police and revenue officials, make life of some of these villagers unendurable. Property and home are not inviolate. In removing or destroying property the official side violates even such law as obtains under the Ordinances. Fines and exactions are a heavy toll to the villager. Apart from this the Ordinances suppress educational and other social service institutions which do not participate in political work. We have come across cases where health resorts and schools have come under the Ordinances.

If we are to take the special cases of the No-rent villages in Bengal, Assam, Gujerat, Canara, and other areas, the state of affairs that obtain can hardly be described as those consistent with civilised administration. When every allowance has been made for the right of a Government to collect its dues, or to maintain law and order, it will be found that a great deal of what

goes on will still have to be classed as irresponsible policedom. Against this the villager is becoming increasingly resentful. The district officials are out of touch and out of sympathy with the real village. Some of them pretend that they are liked in the village and adduce as evidence the collection of people who are present, when on occasion that have turned up in a village. Others point to the figures of land revenue, but the fact that the land revenue is forcibly realized, at least in part, is not often stated.

HOUSEHOLD NAMES

In every village in India Gandhi's name was known and revered. In Gujarat, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, and in the U. P. the Pandit Nehru are household names. Their imprisonment has only added to the affection in which they are held and increased their prestige.

THE INDIAN POLICE

The diehards in the house of Commons often agitate for higher pay for the Indian police. They see in the police the real bulwark of their hold on India, and are anxious to ensure the loyalty of the force. We think, and most Indians would agree with us, that higher pay and better conditions for the police in its rank and file are an essential reform. Indeed it is one of the most disturbing factors of the present situation that they are an ill paid, ill disciplined and ill-educated

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body of men holding in their hands (even in the lower ranks) very wide powers which place the liberty, property and self-respect of innocent people at their mercy.

We had not understood what the expression "Police Raj," which we have heard used so often, meant till we came to India and saw it in action. Petty officials exercise very wide powers, which are freely used. The Ordinances have destroyed every safeguard against police excesses, which obtains all over India and is by no means confined to the ill-paid ranks of the force.

It is difficult to understand why force should be used at all in effecting arrests of civil resisters, as it is admitted that they neither resist nor evade arrests. The explanation offered was that such methods were more effective and cheaper than arrests. The explanation carries with it its own condemnation. Another gross abuse that appeared to be widely prevalent was the practice of allowing the police to buy directly or indirectly goods that had been attached or confiscated.

JAILS AND OFFICIALS

We had great difficulty in obtaining permission to see jails, and had to take refusals in several cases. The total number of jails that the Delegation saw was eight. We have, however, collected evidence from ex-prisoners in different parts of the country. We have no doubt in our mind that ill-treatment of political

prisoners is widely prevalent. Even the jail code is not observed by some officials who impose several penalties for the same jail offence though the code allows only one at a time. The majority of the prisoners are in "C" Class and treated as common criminals. Their warders are criminals. The quality of food varies from jail to jail. Some of the food we have seen is dirty, deficient and quite bad.

They were willing to listen to us, but their attitude was uncritical of excesses. The Ordinance mind pervades the administration. If a bureaucratic form of Government is bad, a bureaucracy ruling by Ordinances is a serious menace to the most innocent of people. There are district officials who recognise that excesses are going on and some who even regret them. We think that the Ordinances are responsible for this indifference to wrong doing which appears to have affected even the better class of official.

We wish to place on record that officials have everywhere been kind enough to give us interviews and talk to us with comparative informality. We discovered that while a good many of them were well up in figures and statistics (especially in the districts) they were entirely out of touch with the sentiments and feelings of the people. We can say without exaggeration that the officials we met, British and Indian, were out of touch and out of sympathy with the masses of the Indian people. Their will is effective not because it echoes the will of the people but on account of the

force they are able to command irrespective of popular will.

HINDUS AND MUSLIMS

No statement about India would be complete without a reference to the Hindu and Muslim problem.

Briefly, we found that in the villages the communal feeling was non-existent. Even in places where one of the communities was in a small minority it exhibited no fear of the majority. The phrases and fears with which Hindu, Muslim and Sikh leaders made us familiar in the towns seemed strangely unrelated to the life and consciousness of villages of India.

The village as we said before thinks as one, and its voice and consciousness cover Hindu and Mussalman. In the towns we found that there were differences, which in some cases were acute. It is not, however, true to speak of a homogeneous Hindu opposition to the homogeneous Muslim claim, or vice versa, as there are shades of differences in the groups in the communities themselves. The younger section of the Muslims are supporters of the Congress and, even among the so-called communal section the feeling of nationalism is very strong the differences with the Congress and the nationalist Hindus being on points of detail. It is not true to say that the majority, of the Muslims in India are supporters of British Raj, or that they are opposed to self-Government.

During our stay here we have seen the bulk of Hindu and Muslim opinion earnestly endeavouring to come to terms. After the Poona Agreement the will to agree has emerged.

THE UNTOUCHABLES

During our stay here we saw India as a whole moved by the fast of Mahatma Gandhi as a protest against the British Communal Award in relation to the Depressed Classes. It released forces which moved even the British Government. We have seen in the villages impressive evidence of the results of Mr. Gandhi's stand against untouchability. The moral prestige of Mr. Gandhi, and the democratic awakening that remains unsuppressed even under Ordinance rule, are breaking down the rigours of caste and custom.

The political significance of the Poona Agreement, to our mind, is that any settlement of Indian problems that is really worth while must be made in India and not at Westminster or Whitehall.

It is admitted even by high officials that repression by itself will not allay discontent. Officialdom claims that the Government is making a genuine effort at substantial constitutional advance and dwells on the immensity of the changes that will take place when power is transferred in the provinces. It is held that when the R. T. C. has concluded its work and produced a constitution there will be peace. We ourselves entertain no hopes and no illusions in this regard.

In our view peace will emerge only when the present policy is abandoned and the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi are brought into effective co-operation for the purpose of a settlement. All other methods will fail.

It is inconceivable that this country will settle down to work Great Britain's constitutional gift when her trusted leaders, with thousands of their following, are in the prison and the voice of the people is either stifled or suppressed.

TRAGEDY AND TAMASHA

We regret that the Government persists in its mistaken view. The way of looking at the nationalist movement as an evil which must be put down, of demanding a surrender from Mahatma Gandhi and of excluding from Government discussions any one who is likely to disturb Government plans, is bound to fail. It is a tragedy that the Viceroy's Government is by its policy blocking every avenue to real peace. The refusal to allow even co-operators like Mr. Jayakar, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Maulana Shaukat Ali to interview Gandhi in prison is an act of belligerency against Indian nationalism which will soon defeat itself. "The Government of India refuses to allow any bridge to be built across the present gulf. It is enforcing a blockade on Indian nationalism." In the face of such a policy it is little wonder that no Indian trusts British "bona-fides" or believes in declarations of good intentions.

Our experience in this country has confirmed our belief that the policy adopted by our organisation in London is right. The India League maintains that the present Round Table Conference, or any attempt to settle the Indian problem with the Congress excluded, is futile. Our executive committee has made it its policy to show up the real nature of the Round Table Conference. The Conference in reality aims to impose British decisions on India under cover of a "representative" Conference. The presence of progressives on the Conference assists the British Government in its tactics. Our executive therefore, instructed Bertrand Russell, Professor Laski, Horrabin and others to cable to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar to withhold co-operation from the Round Table Conference unless the Government were prepared to bring Congress into co-operation. We regret that our attempts in this direction have so far failed.

THE GREAT EFFORT

On the British side the India League has endeavoured to expose the pretence of national unity on Indian policy. During the last twelve months it has used its influence to obtain a revision of Labour policy. The news announcing the Labour party's refusal to co-operate with the Conference is the first step to a real movement on India's behalf in Britain. The India League is not part of the Labour movement, but it sees in the opposition of one party to the present policy the

most effective weapon of breaking it down. Progressive groups will now rally in opposition to an imposed settlement.

We are leaving an India which has seen ten months of Ordinance rule. The Ordinances were originally meant for three months and now the Government finds it necessary to give them statutory permanence. No better proof of their failure is required. Ordinances have only produced more of them, and more discontent. The volume of resentment and discontent,—however expressed—has grown. The sufferings of the common people have been great but they have borne it with a courage and endurance which has stood the test of savage repression.

But India is setting her house in order. The great effort at unity at Allahabad is a landmark in India's history, and whatever its result we are satisfied that the determination to agree is now a powerful factor in Indian political life. We have also seen during our stay that Prime Minister's Awards and imposed settlements can be effectively challenged by Indian determination and replaced by Indian agreements.

OUR EXPERIENCE

We have also seen that the British officials in the country are sensitive to British public opinion though they appear to disregard Indian sentiment. In many places that we have visited the officials have tried to

keep the police in restraint during the period of our stay to avoid our seeing the Ordinances and Police Raj at work. In some cases they locked up possible agitators for some days to prevent clashes. The authorities arrested or "beat up" people who were coming to give us their views and experiences in many cases. Police followed us even into private houses, apparently to intimidate witnesses by their presence. The concern shown by the officials in this respect is a hopeful sign. Public opinion in England will not be content to remain quiet in the face of the material that we propose to place before it. We are conscious of our difficulties and of our own limitations. But with good wishes and the support of friends of liberty, Indian and British, we hope to be of effective use.

We would in conclusion express our warm appreciation of the kindness shown and the assistance given to the Delegation as a whole and to its members personally. We have formed friendships in India which we prize greatly. We leave with the feeling that the Indians have received us with genuine sympathy and taken us into their confidence. Indian hospitality and courtesy will be among the lasting impressions that this visit will leave on us. We can only express our regret that the interest taken in us by our Indian friends has frequently brought down upon them the heavy hand of the Government of India.

(The Indian Express, Thursday, November 10-1932.)

2. Report of Mr. Leonard W. Matters :*(A Member of the Delegation)**The India League Delegation**What it saw and did*

NO. I—OUR MISSION

I have now been back in London after my tour with the India League Delegation sufficiently long to review in a calm and peaceful atmosphere the work of our mission, and fill in some of the detail of the picture that emerges from what, at the time, was a bewildering kaleidoscope of scenes, incidents and impressions.

In response to the requests of some of my friends, and particularly my journalistic colleagues in India, I promised that as soon as I had leisurely examined my notes and quietly arrived at my own judgment on certain issues I would write a series of articles for circulation, if not necessarily for publication in India.

I made a mental reservation about publication for the obvious reason—the warrant for which cannot be questioned—that the Press in India is under very severe restrictions as to the class and character of matter which it may publish. My own view of these restrictions is that they are intolerable. Indeed, I do not know, as a journalist of 35 years' standing with an intimate acquaintance with newspaper law and libel actions, how I could possibly follow my professional occupation in India. I will not, at this stage, at least

argue this aspect of Indian rule in India. I mention it merely to indicate that if this series of articles is to be published, I must necessarily endeavour to put myself in the position of the distant Editor and not impose so great a task or risk upon him by asking him to exercise that which may not be allowable in public print, or leaving him to publish that which may make his life more adventurous than need be in these difficult days.

A case is always strengthened by reasonable presentation. Profession and political experience have taught me that obvious truth. I want this series of articles to be so reasonable in argument and statement of fact that even the British authorities will read them, and even though they disagree, as they are perfectly entitled to do, with what I have to say, they will not have fair justification for decrying me as an incompetent observer or for descending on newspapers and forfeiting their security because they publish what I say.

The purpose of the Delegation :

Both in India and here in England people have commonly expressed opinions about our mission showing that they had no comprehension of our purpose in visiting the country.

My colleagues and I of the India League had no decision to make by visiting India on what I call 'first Principles'. Our League is openly and definitely in favour of self-government for India. Indeed, so is the

British Government. It is pledged up to the hilt to give self-government, no matter what may be said or thought of the validity or the bonafides of its pledges. Another first principle on which I atleast had made up my mind was that certain conditions must obtain in India no matter how stubbornly the authorities denied their existence. As "Civilised Warfare" is an absurd contradiction in terms so humane repression is an insult to my intelligence and a denial of all the political history I have ever studied—the history of subject peoples of Rome; of the Spanish American Colonists in the repression of their movement for political independence; of Italian Patriots under Austrian domination, and of Ireland in the throes of her struggle with Britain.

No policy—whatever may be urged in its justification—aimed at repressing or checking the manifestation of popular political agitation can avert its own inherent and inevitable consequences. Almost every word one writes about India can be challenged. It may be said that the political agitation is not popular. I will not enter into the argument. It is clearly so widespread that peculiar and special measures have had to be adopted against it and that is for me sufficient proof of its popularity. I repeat that you cannot have a repressive policy without its inborn evils and I am not aware that British Officialism claims anything more than that repression is conducted with the minimum of unfortunate effect upon the innocent. The

attitude towards what is called the "Law-less" is that they deserve all they get.

Our Delegation had a very limited purpose to fulfil. It was broadly, to examine Britain's relationship to India under the present peculiar conditions, and to ascertain the true character of this repression--the meaning of the British rule at the moment,—to get at Indian public opinion and return to England with facts. We were not in India to investigate every problem—those concerning Indian Peoples themselves, as well as those in which Britain nationally has some responsibility for solution.

It is no use any choleric colonel or "sun-baked bureaucrat" getting superior about this and contrasting his 25 years in the country with our 86 days. If I were asked to go to India and report all there is to be reported upon political history and relationships, civilisation and culture, village and family organisation, religious differences, economics, finance, etc., etc., I should accept the mission only on the assurance that I would be reincarnated with the guaranteed life of a century.

We do not pretend to know India and all about it. The colonel and the bureaucrat can have a monopoly of their superior knowledge. Our limited objective could be reached and was reached in our 86 days in the country. If it be argued that a complete understanding of all the other aspects of an admittedly complex problem is essential to a determination of the main

issue, the answer is simple. Whatever bearing these questions—the interest and importance of which I am not lightly dismissing—have on the major political problem facing the two countries, that bearing was surely thoroughly, examined and weighed by Britain when she gave her pledges to assure to India at the earliest possible moment substantial independence in the form of Dominion Status. Both the colonel and the recalcitrant bureaucrat are out of court to-day with any of their stock argument that were disposed of when Britain gave her pledges.

I say therefore, that the Delegation was right to restrict its investigations to Britain's relationships to India under the peculiar conditions of the moment, and to ascertain the character of the present policy. I could determine both these things by intensive travel and inquiry over the limited period of time it could give to the task, and it is simply futile to argue, as the "Civil and Military gazette" did while we were in Lahore, that we could not learn all there was to be learned about the Punjab in the time we spent in that Province. We were not pretending to know all about the Punjab in a week.

As to the bonafides of our investigations and the validity of the information we secured, Sir Samuel Hoare made a valiant effort in the House of Commons on November 28 to discredit the Delegation. As an ex-member of Parliament it was clear to me that the India Office itself had prompted the question to which

he replied. Every newspaper in London promptly featured the criticism of us by the Secretary of State. Only one of them has had the decency to publish any answer to it by a member of the India League Delegation. I shall make my reply for India in the next article.

(The Hindu, 29th December, 1932.)

NO. II.—ALLEGED NEGLECT OF OFFICIAL VIEW

Put briefly, Sir Samuel Hoare's grievance against the India League Delegation, can be expressed in four complaints.

"The delegates did not seem anxious to avail themselves of official offers of help, and they were not disposed to credit accurate information when it was supplied to them."

"The party chose throughout to take its impressions from Congress workers."

"Congress headquarters staged demonstrations involving clashes with the police for the party's benefit."

"The India League received a substantial donation from a prominent Indian Congress worker about the time the mission was being arranged."

I am not aware that any offer of official help was ever rejected by the Delegation as a whole, or by any member of it. I would be glad to hear some specific

evidence in support of this complaint. As to accurate information from official sources I am ignorant of anything having been supplied to us in the way of documentary, or statistical evidence bearing on the situation. We interviewed collectively large numbers of officials—His Excellency the Viceroy, members of the Central and Provincial Governments, Police and Gaol Superintendents, Magistrates and subordinate police officials. They were all courteous, and within the necessary limits of their authority to speak freely, they were informative. Evidently, however, Sir Samuel Hoare and officialism at large in India—it is obviously associated with this part of his complaint—consider that anything stated verbally by an official, including his opinions on disputable points in a controversy, must be accepted without question.

I am sorry that my long experience as a journalist, and my limited experience as a politician, do not confirm what is evidently the official view of its own infallibility and unerring accuracy. Moreover, having given up much of my time in different parts of the world to important investigations I have learned that it is the duty of the honest investigator to test every bit of information he receives, and that he is not to be excused from his obligations by saying:—"I did not enquire further because I was *officially* told." Not even to oblige or please the highly efficient Indian Civil Service could I personally let my investigation be invalidated by anybody by laying myself open to the

charge that I did not test official information. As a matter of fact I found it wrong in more than one instance, and if the Indian Government would allow the publication of those instances I would welcome a challenge from it. I will, before I have concluded, state one or two things which may not be palatable to the official mind, properly jealous of a reputation for accuracy and truthfulness.

That the party chose throughout to take its impressions from Congress workers is simply nonsense. We gathered facts; not impressions. That was our obligation, and if the contents of my shorthand notebooks, with the record of testimony given in the presence of the police, and the cross-examination of witnesses, the admissions by police and magistrates of the accuracy of statements made could only be transcribed and freely published, even the officials would say, "Well, that was thorough-going enquiry." More than once I was able to give officials unquestionable facts—names, places, dates, confirmation by police—of which they had previously no knowledge. We gained impressions, of course, but the charge that they were based exclusively upon the views of Congressmen is again ridiculous. Have we no eyes and ears and at least some capacity for forming independent judgments? The suggestion behind Sir Samuel Hoare's criticism on this score is, of course, that we met only Congress workers. Wrong again! We met people of all shades of opinion—and lived with them, thanks to the uniform

kindness and hospitality that were extended to us. Would the Government of India like a complete list of everybody I met in the country? I doubt whether the C. I. D. have done their job properly in this respect, or the Secretary of State would never have been put in danger of having his totally unfair and inaccurate suggestion exposed as ludicrous. He might also be astonished to comprehend from the transcription of my notes of interviews with non-congressmen how substantially their views have influenced my impressions. There is, for instance, the classical review of the situation by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru—non-Congress—who was my host at Allahabad:—"The tragedy of the British Government's failure in India is not its refusal to satisfy the demands of Congress but its incapacity to meet the requirements of even the Moderates."

On the third point the Secretary of State and the Indian Government know perfectly well that "clashes with the police" are a misuse of words, but in any case they do not have to be raged. Police action against pickets, processionists and demonstrators takes place daily and almost hourly in some part of India or the other. Is it not known that practically all over India there are four or five days in each month upon which Congress people make it a point of honour to attempt some demonstration? Is it not known that in addition to these regular days, most localities notify the police that demonstrations of flag-salutation, or homage to some dead Congressman or imprisoned worker will be

attempted? Even the Government of India cannot pretend that nothing goes on, or that only when a quartette of critical visitors comes along does Congress "stage" trouble with the police, I do not mind reasonable argument and criticism—not even the assertion that I am "dangerous", as the Governor of Bengal was informed—but not even the Secretary of State is entitled to insult me by seeking to deprive me of self-respect for my native intelligence.

In truth, if Congress "staged" such assaults by the police, then Congress was singularly unsuccessful. Perhaps that was not its fault. The police asserted more than once that they had their instructions not to indulge in a "clash" when we were about, and I shall never forget the pathetic grievance of the poor old magistrate, at Ankola over an "accident."

A crowd of two or three thousand had assembled to greet me the day before I arrived. As all the recognised Congress leaders were in gaol, and the villagers failed to inform the magistrate what was the reason for their gathering in the town, and a telegram from the Collector was delayed, neither the magistrate nor the police knew of my expected arrival. The police "clashed" with the crowd—with no casualties to the police—and His Honour could only exclaim with tears in his eyes: "Sir, If I had only known you were coming this unfortunate thing would not have occurred.". I found out that the Magistrate did not even know the police were to attack. He did not order it, but he claimed he could

have prevented it, and I will leave that incident at that. Elsewhere we witnessed unlawful assemblies and demonstrations—at Agra one lasted two hours—and we might have formed a most favourable impression of the toleration of the authorities if the policeman who stood by smiling had not looked so extremely wise; if he had not said:—"Nothing will happen while you are in town"

I know that our India League raised the money for our tour from its supporters in England, and I also know that the donation referred to by Sir Samuel Hoare was received, but when he suggests that it was Congress money, he is wrong.

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(The Hindu December 30-1932.)

NO. III.—THE DELEGATION'S FINANCES

Sir Samuel Hoare does not play cricket. All Englishmen and most Indians will understand just what that means.

He interposed the point about the donation to the India League funds and the suggestion that the money came from Congress, entirely on his own initiative, because he believed it would finally discredit the reliability of our Delegation's report.

Sir Samuel is one of those quaint and interesting Englishmen—proud of their citizenship of the most commercially minded nation in the world—who thinks that if those do not like to make any contribution

to the expenses of an enquiry such as ours then the investigation automatically becomes valueless. He also believes that if he can only suggest that Congress took any share in financing our mission then nobody will credit us with good faith. He says, in effect, that if a thing is paid for, it has no value. That, of course, is a negation of the principles of commerce, but it is also, in Sir Samuel's case, a very dangerous argument. He draws £ 5,000 per annum—less "economic crisis" discount of 20 per cent—for, among other things, giving his impression and views on India from the official British side. I will not ask him to turn his money argument in upon himself.

The Secretary of State knows most things about our mission, and he knows perfectly well that our League raised the money from its own members and supporters. Congress made no donation, and Sir Samuel would have stopped the specific donation to which he refers, had it been from Congress funds. Such funds, when the Government can lay its hands upon them, are forfeit to the Crown. But as Sir Samuel does not know *all* about our mission I can inform him that Congress not only did not contribute to our expenses, but a very large and influential section of Congress opposed any recognition of the Delegation. All the time we were in India, and up to the moment we left the country, this same section refused to credit us with any bonafides. So we are in that unfortunate position of being suspects on both sides.

I do not blame Congress, or that section of it, which did not approve of us. India has probably had enough of Royal Commissions, official enquiries, inquisitive visitors, kind friends, and candid and frequently incompetent critics. When I was staying with a Muslim gentleman—non-Congress again—he reported to me an eloquent and instructive remark by his staid old butler.

“Sir”, the butler asked, “who are these people staying with us, and why are they in India?”

My host told him that we were friends from England who were trying to ascertain the conditions so that they might go back to England and help the Indian people. The butler shook his head and replied:

“Ah, Sir. We are always receiving such people, but nothing ever seems to happen.”

My own definite answer to Sir Samuel Hoare's innuendo about money is one he may not like. If Congress has paid the whole of our expenses it would have been only right, and I should quite openly have acknowledged and justified it. Why not? Who has paid for all the State and other official enquiries on various phases of the Indian problem? Generally the Indian people as tax-payers. And what they have got for their money? Invariably a report indelibly tinted with the official side of the case. No report to my knowledge has ever given the plain facts of the situation as seen by the Indian man and woman. In the present situation whoever hears what the people say

or think? Who has ever troubled to go among them in the cities, towns and villages, to invite them informally to open their hearts and their minds on the political, economic, social and other questions which constitute their life? That is what we did, and I say emphatically that no investigating body, official or otherwise, ever took the pains that we did to ascertain what the people were thinking and doing.

If there is one thing clear about the Indian situation to-day, it is this, that the Government and the officials have no just cause for complaint that they are not heard. The official side of the case is constantly being put by the Secretary of State, the Viceroy, the Provincial Governors, the pro-Government press, and 90 per cent of the daily newspapers in England, when these condescend to mention the existence of India. There can be no substance in Sir Samuel Hoare's complaint that our Delegation does not speak for the official side. How many more voices does officialism in India want? Apparently the voice of everybody. Are the people articulate and are they heard? That is a question that answers itself under the Ordinances and the restrictions on the Press. Who in England hears Congress? It is still the one great political organisation of the Indian peoples; its policy still acceptable to the masses; its influence scarcely diminished by twelve months of repression and imprisonment of all its leaders. It has no voice even at the present Round Table Conference which Mr. Churchill—

no friend of Congress—says will be devoid of all authority and validity merely because the great opposition to Government is unrepresented.

Congress would be well entitled, if it could do so, to engage a body of competent enquirers to proceed to India and investigate its side of the case in the present crisis, and to pay all the expenses. Such payment would not necessarily mean the production of a "one-way" report unless we all descend to the level of Sir Samuel Hoare's mentality which seems to assume that payment of expenses in such circumstances means the bribing of investigators to misrepresent hard facts. I abandon hope that the Secretary of State will realise that his "money argument" would, if intelligent people accepted it, vitiate every official report that has ever been presented on India, and would put all the investigators in the category of bribe-takers against the truth. Sir Samuel Hoare had better learn to play cricket, instead of tennis—and no disrespect to tennis is intended.

If Congress had paid our Delegation's expenses I would gladly, unashamedly, say so, but I would have seen that I had travelled in proper style in India. My colleagues and I—out of the paucity of our limited funds,—hardly enjoyed ourselves in India. Only once by accident was I ever in a first-class carriage. Commonly we travelled third class and intermediate with sometimes the luxury of second-class. Shabby dak bungalows were our common lot on long and tiring

journeys. Now and then we stayed at a decent hotel, but we experienced real comfort and happiness only when some good friend gave us the hospitality of his Indian home. We make no complaint about the conditions under which we travelled and lived. They were unavoidable, largely because we were poor and because we had an entirely different conception of our mission from that which well-meaning, comfortably-placed, but sadly myopic officials entertained. In the main they thought that we ought to see only those things they wanted us to see, and do precisely what all other English visitors to India had always done.

Well, we were entirely independent and were determined upon an independent investigation. We accepted Congress aid, without any obligation, upon us. We met people of all shades of opinion, but two persons I did not meet were the two newspaper editors in Lahore who declined an invitation to foregather with their colleagues to confer with us, and then wrote that we carefully avoided meeting anybody but Congressmen !

(The Hindu, December 31, 1932.)

NO. IV.—BRITISH PRESTIGE.

Mere distances travelled in India by visitors or investigators do not necessarily mean much; otherwise the person who went all over the extensive railway system and never moved beyond a railway station might easily claim to be an authority on the country.

Nonetheless our Delegation journeyed widely, the minimum distance travelled by any one of us being 12,000 miles. We visited all but the Central Provinces, and had more than a glimpse of several of the Indian States, notably Mysore and Baroda, which enjoy the reputation of being among the most progressive of the territories outside of British India. By motor car, bullock cart and other means of transport we got far from the ordinary tourist trails, and I personally visited over a hundred villages, some of them so remote and so difficult to reach that I was not surprised on occasion to learn from the oldest inhabitant that I was the first European he had ever seen in his native place.

At times I felt that such villages had been sadly neglected by English officials, but generally I would agree that as there are estimated to 700,000 villages in British India it is no reflection on the I. C. S., that all of them are not regularly visited. To reach some of the villages at no further distance than 40 miles from a railway station took us more than once, five or six hours of hard motoring over shocking roads and rutted bullock tracks. We reached such villages, and had frank and free talk with the people only because we had the help of some local guide and linguistic expert who was openly and frankly a Congress worker. I do not know how "official" help could have served us better, if as well, and in fact I doubt whether we would have got the information we wanted under the pilotage

of any official known to the villagers. More than once the village folk were suspicious of my topee—the badge of officialism—and would not speak freely until assured that I was not a Government man. It was a common experience to see the children running helter skelter into the huts when I appeared.

This I say for the benefit of those who may still believe that Congress controlled our movements. Never once did our guides attempt to keep any section of the people away from us, or fail to call for anybody we wanted to see. In the large crowds that usually assembled—if there were police, or C. I. D., men, these were always present and can confirm what I say—we received statements from anybody who cared to speak. Members of the depressed classes and Muslims were always invited to show hands. Questions were addressed to them, or if they did not wish to speak when they were in a minority, we would take them aside so that they could say what they had to say in peace and confidence. At the village of Jahman, 35 miles from Lahore, we gave two hours to hearing the main body of the villagers, and then we went with eight persons to the top of a house and interviewed them without an interpreter, for one of them spoke English. The villagers called them “toadies” evidently because, as they said, they had helped the “gracious Government.” We had no feeling against anybody, and anybody could meet us.

My last challenge to officialism is this that I will go back to India and with an official investigator

and any two independent interpreters, secure to official satisfaction complete corroboration of every bit of evidence that is now in my possession. No Congress worker need be present. I think the people I interviewed will accept me as a friend and speak freely, and I am so convinced of their desire to state nothing but the truth that I have no fear that anything they told me can be shaken in cross-examination. Does the Government of India accept that challenge?

When I interviewed His Excellency, the Viceroy, at Delhi on October 13, he plainly indicated that he disapproved of those with whom we had associated and by implication, of the character of our investigation. That, of course, is His Excellency's right. I do not think, however, that he could suggest a more effective way of getting at the minds and hearts of the people—once granting that we were entitled to make a free and independent enquiry and go our own way about it—than the method we did adopt. Lord Willingdon suggested that he would be “surprised” to know that he was fully aware of all we did in India and what we said and saw. My simple reply was that as the C. I. D. had followed us closely and reported promptly upon our movements and interviews, we had no occasion for surprise. From the moment we landed at Bombay till the moment we left we were fully aware that the police shadowed us. Invariably the local police were present at our public interviews and meetings, and the C. I. D. followed us faithfully. I am sorry I cannot

say that their reporting was so faithful, but they did their best, and I did not expect them to write shorthand or be so accurate in a highly technical job as myself.

For my part I raise no objection to the attentions of the police. Frequently they were over-officious and at times painfully stupid, but nowhere in the world are the police chosen for their brain-power. In Europe, for example, it is brawn, not brain, that is wanted.

NATIONAL FEELING

The first general conclusion to which we were forced in India is that national feeling is a deep and genuine thing—widespread and ineradicable. That conclusion has been reached by every official body of investigators, and is emphasised in all reports including that of the Simon Commission. Probably less than one per cent of the politically intelligent Indians, of all communities and shades of opinion, stand for the continued maintenance of British rule as now constitutionally established. The people do want Swaraj—in one form or the other. Some interpret it as Dominion Status. Others want less than that, and very large sections want considerably more. Whatever may be their conception of self-government the people want it, and they do not want a continuance of British Raj, or the unsatisfactory thing called “dyarchy.” Probably, most of the officials will differ from me. Their contacts are mainly with those whom they describe as “loyal to

the British Government"—those who say they want things to continue as they are. Nationalist and other Indians describe these people in another way—several ways, perhaps—but I shall not annoy anybody by repeating the different terms applied to them. The fact is clear that India wants the big change. That it may be ungrateful for so wanting is beside the point, and would take too long to argue.

Another definite fact is that Britain's prestige in India among the Indians of nationalist outlook has gone for good. Britain may retain some prestige derived from fear, but she has none that derives from good-will and admiration for wise and beneficent rule.

(The Hindu, January 2, 1933.)

NO. V.—NO CONFIDENCE IN BRITAIN

I hope I have said enough to confirm what every other body of investigators has found, that there is a nation-wide feeling in India for Swaraj in some form or the other.

This feeling is not confined to Congress. That body, I understand, is merely the present-day spearhead of the movement, and its membership probably does not go beyond a quarter of a million. But anybody who takes that figure and argues from it that quantitatively the resistant or refractory movement against British rule is negligible is simply deluding himself.

It is the Congress "spirit" that counts in India, and that spirit is entertained by untold millions of people outside the definite ranks of Congress. On the first day I landed in Bombay and went round the wholesale and retail piece-goods markets to see for myself what the effect of the trade boycott was, I asked a small shopkeeper if he could confirm Sir Samuel Hoare's claim that Congress had been "crushed". His reply was:—"You must crush India, for all India is Congress"

That may not be strictly true; but it is nearly so. Mr. Haig recognised its truth when he declared in the Legislative Assembly that the Government had no desire to crush the spirit of Nationalism while it directed all its energies against Congress. There may be a distinction and a difference between the organisation and the spirit, but I certainly found the two things inextricably interlocked. Members of Provincial Governments, Provincial Councillors, bankers, lawyers, merchants, college principals, and unpretentious townsmen—Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian—on the very widest field of enquiry, disclaimed any association with Congress, but all expressed the Congress spirit, as in logic they could not help doing when they spoke as Nationalists. Frequently they disagreed entirely with Congress tactics and activities, but when they looked at the Ordinances and the general policy of Britain they spoke in a manner indistinguishable from that of the most fervent Congressman.

The British critic of the Nationalist movement never stands on two legs at the same time, but assumes the ridiculous and difficult attitude of trying to maintain a physical and logical balance on each leg alternatively. At one moment he says that the movement is one confined only to the intelligentsia, and the next he asserts it is restricted to the illiterate mass. He proclaims it to be a product of the politicians of the cities, or he declares it is a delusion of the villagers. I could never induce him to stand on one leg for any time, or on both all the time. More than one official told me to go into the villages, there to learn that the simple people knew nothing about politics. When I came from such villages and reported that the people did have a clear idea in favour of a big political change—though they might not understand all its implications—some other official would assure me that either they or I had been got at. If he happened to know personally that the villagers stood for Swaraj, he would, as likely, as not tell me that they were ignorant, and that after all, such things could only be understood by intelligent people in the cities and the towns.

The general feeling throughout the country being an emphatic demand for a transfer of the fullest measure of authority from British to Indian hands—for the sake of moderation. I express the Nationalist spirit in the terms employed in all official British statements on the situation—and the transfer being delayed for good or other reasons, it is quite unnecessary to

tell me that British officialism has to contend with many difficulties. That goes without saying. Congress as a party is pledged to non-violent non-co-operation, and the practice of civil disobedience in various forms. The British Government in India, bent on governing and ruling, has to face this opposition which is active in many directions and passive over practically the whole of British India. Of course its task is difficult. You cannot delay, and you certainly cannot thwart, a nation-wide movement for self-government and have an easy task of it—not according to my reading of Imperialist history. The task becomes no easier when you arm yourself with all kinds of extraordinary, extra-judicial powers to hold the movement in check, and entrust the actual execution of the repressive policy to the police force.

THE ORDINANCE RULE

I have said that such a policy as Britain is pursuing these days to suppress Congress and keep in check outward manifestations of support for the Nationalist movement must produce its own evils, and it is idle to deny them. Of their very nature the Ordinances must lay everybody in India under severe restrictions and disabilities and instead of arousing goodwill, as some lunatics seem to imagine they do, they must intensify the illwill. It is besides the argument to say, even for a moment, that they are justified. I am stating what in fact must be their effect, and

when an unpopular police force like that of India has to carry them out against the popular will and view of what liberty should be allowed for the expression of public opinion and democratic aspirations, it strikes me as equally futile, not to say an insult to intelligence, to pretend that no cases of gross hardship and public scandal arise. The best intentions in the world cannot avert such cases.

In India it is impossible to make an enquiry into the constitutional present or future without asking what degree of confidence exists in the good faith of Britain in relation to her pledges. The answer I got to this stock question of mine was uniformly consistent. At best it was "Very little"; at worst it was "Absolutely none"! I did not put the question to Congressmen, because I know their views. I put it to, among others, those surprisingly eloquent and moderate people of the Daccan Sabha at Poona; to the late Sir Ali Imam; to an M. L. C., of Bihar and Orissa; to every non-Congress man of substance and standing whom I met, and I never got a better answer, from the British point of view than:—"We once believed fully, but now our confidence is almost gone." They all contrasted promise with performance, and there was not one man who did not cite Ordinance rule and its evils as conclusive evidence that instead of wishing the Indians to preach and reach their conception of democracy the British sought to stamp all spirit out of them.

That may be an unwarrantably wrong idea, but it is entertained by responsible and serious-minded men in every part of India that I visited. At Poona I asked a group that comprised ex-judges, ex-deputy commissioners and others, why they did not go out and state publicly the policy they outlined to me, and I got the eloquent answer: "We would all go to goal."

(The Hindu, January 2, 1933.)

NO. VI.—NO ILL-WILL TO BRITISH

In concluding the interview which he was good enough to grant to Miss Whately and myself at Delhi, His Excellency the Viceroy said:—

"Now whatever views you may have formed about India, I want to say this. I will guarantee that conditions here are 100 per cent better than they were 18 months ago, and I will also guarantee that the people are 100 per cent happier. They can, at least, go about their business at liberty—free from unlawful interference."

I have no doubt Lord Willingdon sincerely believes that, but my own conviction was that he was speaking from his own standpoint as an administrator, and was assessing, unconsciously, not the condition of the country at large, nor the state of mind of the people, but the relative ease of his administrative task.

All the official pronouncements on the situation strengthen my conviction.

As far back as January 27 last—I think that was the date—Sir Samuel Hoare was assuring the British Parliament that the situation was quite satisfactory. No doubt, it was, from the strictly administrative point of view. Every active leader of the Indian Nationalism was incarcerated, together with some thirty thousand other persons; the Ordinances were operating in all their rigour, and the Police were ruthlessly dealing with manifestations of popular protest. But the Secretary of State was quite premature in suggesting that the political movement was crushed. It never can be crushed. It can only be “contained”, and that has an entirely different meaning. Only in the sense that after nearly a year of relentless repression the administration now has the political unrest under its own control, and has been able to suppress much of the outward manifestations of public protest, can it be claimed that conditions are 100 per cent better. What this has meant to the administration itself in the diversion of its energies and activities from the normal functions of Government to the abnormal, it is impossible to assess, but nobody of imagination would be prepared to say that the immediate outlook for an administration concerned mainly with the assertion of its authority is not more satisfactory than it was.

THE VICEROY'S VERDICT ON THE PRESENT SITUATION

I am not in a position to compare the situation in India with what it may have been 18 months ago, but judging from what I saw during my recent visit if the conditions now are 100 per cent better than they then were—even from the limited administrative point of view—the position then must have been tragic indeed. The vital question, however, is whether this 100 per cent improvement, which Lord Willingdon claims as the result of his handling of the situation, has any meaning whatever for India as a country, the Indians as a people, the economic state of trade, commerce and industry, and the relations between Britain and India? I have to doubt whether that kind of improvement has taken place. To me it seems a manifest absurdity to claim that the people are 100 per cent happier. How could that possibly be? Never, in my reading of history, has the happiness of the people improved 100 per cent under any regime comparable to that which exists in India to-day. Lord Willingdon and the officials may be 100 per cent happier because of the easier conditions for them, but I found no Indian of any creed, caste, or political outlook, who was ready to confirm the Viceroy's judgment upon the state of mind of the people. Had I found such confirmation I should have been confronted with a miracle—the increased happiness of millions of insurgent minds living under what to them is a reign of terror.

The first person to whom I put the Viceroy's verdict on the situation was a Mussalman municipal councillor of a great city. He was non-Congress, highly educated, wealthy, world travelled and eminently sane and sober in his political judgment. His answer to me was: "His Excellency's statement is 100 per cent untrue." The next man of importance was that loveable soul, Jamshed Mehta, Parsee Mayor of Karachi—merchant, capitalist, philanthropist and patriot. After telling me how seriously he viewed the general economic condition of the country, this soft-spoken man said:—"How can the people be happy when thousands of men and women they revere are in prison for no other crime than asking that they shall be free?"

On broad grounds and from the point of view which most interests me—the relations between Britain and India—I would submit the Viceroy's pronouncement to the test of a few simple questions. Are those relations more cordial to-day than they were? Is there greater respect and honour among the Indians for the British Nation? Is there more faith in the sincerity of the British Government? Are the trading relations of the two countries on a better basis of mutuality of interest and free reciprocity? Does the Government of India enjoy greater prestige than it did? Can it command more goodwill than sullen submission arising from fear? Are the people really happier than they were? Let the Viceroy put those questions to any Indian and ask for a frank and fearless answer,

and he will get a complete negative to each one—as I did. Let him put them to his officials. Let him put them to himself, if he can divest himself for one moment of the administrative character. He can say, as he does, that it is his job to govern, and the maintenance of his Government is all that concerns him—of course Lord Willingdon would add that he is equally concerned with the welfare and happiness of the country—but that is not the matter under discussion. His positive statement that conditions are 100 per cent better and the people 100 per cent happier is the issue. On it I have not the slightest doubt that my Mussalman municipal councillor was absolutely right.

“NO ILL-WILL AGAINST THE BRITISH PEOPLE”

To me it seemed extraordinary that the people have no ill-will against the British people. They detest and despise the British system of rule under which they live, but for the English people they entertain no hatred. Of course in so large a country and among such masses there are individuals and groups who hate the sight and the name of the English. The Bengal terrorists proclaim death to all of my race, but there is still no doubt that 95 out of every hundred Indians retain a friendly feeling towards the English. I was not deluded into this belief because of the warm and cordial reception of myself and colleagues as known friends. It is a feeling inborn in the character of the Indians—

Hindu, Mussalman, Sikh and all others. I do not think they could really hate anybody. More than one British official told me how well liked he was personally among the Indians, and he was quite right and quite justified in mentioning it. There are numberless splendid characters among these officials, and they make a big mistake if they imagine that a critic like myself sees them all as black-souled villains. The Indians know their good qualities, appreciate them as men, and understand that frequently they have a most unpleasant duty to fulfil. Where the British official so sadly goes wrong in his interpretation of this personal goodwill is that he takes it also as applicable to the system—the Government—of which he is part and parcel.

That system brings itself “into hatred and contempt”, to use a very familiar phrase from laws that have no counterpart in England. That system is the thing—the impersonal thing—the Indians loathe.

(The Hindu, January 6, 1933.)

NO. VII.—MAINTENANCE OF GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY

Nobody, not even the Government, will deny that practically every kind of criticism of authority in India is unlawful and punishable. Only a limited number of blissfully ignorant persons in England believe that the Indians enjoy the same measure of liberty and freedom

of political expression that the English themselves enjoy, and it takes a man like Lord Reading, once Viceroy of India, to go to the United States and talk sheer nonsense about "Law and Justice" in the land he once ruled, implying as he did that principles of Law and Justice as known in England apply to India.

I have before me many judgments of the High Courts of India, delivered within the last few months on issues arising from the extraordinary laws of India—I refer to the laws that are permanent and regarded as normal—and on issues arising from the operation of the Ordinances both as they affect newspapers and the general public. From these judgments it is absolutely established that almost every type of criticism of Government and officials is punishable. I would like some eminent English jurist to read the argument and judgment in the case of the "Indian Daily Mail" and then assert to me that such "law and justice" has any basis in England. Why the Chief Justice of Bombay himself was obviously astounded to appreciate what type of law it was he had to administer, or interpret. Take his questions to the Advocate-General:

"Do you mean to say", he asked in what seems to me surprise, "that the carrying out of the Ordinances is administration of justice? No appeal lies in such cases."

"Suppose Government institutes Star Chamber. Do you call that administration of justice?"

“Supposing a man is arrested and sentenced without trial. Do you call it administration of justice?”

“Supposing Ordinances usurp the function of the Courts of Law. Would you call it administration of justice?”

To each of these eloquent questions, each one pertinent and each one an astounding commentary from the Bench upon a system that would not be tolerated in England or the Dominions for one moment, the learned Advocate-General gave unequivocal affirmatives such as “Decidedly”! The Chief Justice had to rule that he was right, even when he contended that the truth of the press report of unlawful police action—the facts were never in dispute—was immaterial. I would like the Editors of “The Times” and the “Daily Mail”, who always talk so glibly about the blessings to India of British Law and Justice, to tell me what they thought if they suddenly found themselves in an English court, unable, in defending themselves against actions for civil or criminal libel, to advance either of the pleas, “true in substance and in fact” and “fair comment upon a matter of public interest.” I do not think the Chief Justice of Bombay will ever maintain in England that the laws of India embody the principles of Law and Justice as he so brilliantly mastered those principles in his student days or at the English Bar.

“TRAGIC SENTENCES”

There is another judgment before me in which the High Court of Calcutta upholding an appeal under

the Press Ordinance against a punitive order on a newspaper which had criticised a police official, declared that while this order was unwarranted the Court did not lay it down that "in no circumstances would such criticism of the individual police exempt a newspaper from liability for bringing into hatred and contempt etc., etc." I have a dozen other High Court rulings exposing ludicrous and frequently tragic sentences imposed with no justification whatever in law. One is that of a man who served six months for an offence under the Ordinances before the Ordinances were in force or applicable to his case.

I am not disposed to quarrel with the official or the person who wishes to remind me that India is not England, and that what is law in the former need not be the law in the latter. My quarrel, if any, is with the pretentious humbug who would have me believe that English legal or judicial principles operate in India at any time, and especially in time of political unrest. They simply do not. I understand the official or the person who tells me quite plainly, and means what he says, that in India the Government does what it thinks it will do, and does not argue on fixed principles. When we get that degree of bluntness and honesty, we may not know where we are, but at least we are well on the way to agreement that anything may happen in India and nobody need be surprised or shocked—as I certainly was not. When the exponent, of the "firm hand"—men of the type of General Sir Alfred Knox,

M. P., whom I heard say in the House of Commons "We must show that we are still the top dogs", discloses an honest, if blunt and brutal mind, I begin to understand him. He says in effect, "All and any means can be employed to smash the opposition to our rule," and my simple reply is "That is clear, but do not whine when somebody else gives the facts as to the consequences of your policy and your methods."

Regulations of the East India Company's time, penal codes, special statutes dealing with sedition and "creating disaffection," are so wide and comprehensive in their character and judicial interpretation that I should have thought no Government in India needed further armament in its repressive battery, but on top of all these there are the Emergency Ordinances. The "Emergency" having passed, according to Sir Samuel Hoare, the Ordinances are to be part and parcel of the statute law. I shall not criticise them in these articles, but will content myself with saying that from what I saw of police action in India the Ordinances were not wanted, except, perhaps, to give a legal verisimilitude of authority and justification to whatever is done. The police are all-powerful, and practically everything they do finds some kind of legal sanction. At least I could hear of no substantial official restrictions upon their authority and acts. The average Indian critic of the regime will say that the police are the Government and the Law. In the village of Amahra, Sub-Division of Dinapore, Bihar, I was told by

half a dozen witnesses of a police raid that when the villagers protested against actions for which there can be no warrant even in Indian law, they got the reply: "This is not British Raj, nor Swaraj. What you are getting is Police Raj." And I believe it.

In England the police are engaged normally, as to about 95 per cent of their activities, in defence of the people. Their repressive or punitive functions are the least and last part of their duties. That, of course, is because the English are a law-abiding people- it is easy to be obedient to simple basic principles of law that not even the highest authority, nor the police can violate with impunity. In India seemingly at all times, the police functions are reversed. They are 95 per cent repressive and punitive, and only 5 per cent protective. I raise no argument about the reasons. I state the fact to emphasise again, that, given the policy and the character of the principal functions of the police, excesses and scandals are bound to arise and like "civilised warfare" "humane repression" becomes nauseous non-sense."

(The Hindu, January, 11-1933.)

NO. VIII.—EVIDENCE THAT CANNOT BE DENIED

The Critic of conditions in India to-day would be a coward if he restricted himself to abusing the police

and failed to proclaim that they are not ultimately responsible.

Under what law or Ordinance are the police authorised to beat as they do, individual pickets of cloth, opium and liquor shops? They have legal authority to disperse gatherings of demonstrators, crowds, and groups of pickets, but I am speaking of the regular attack with canes and lathis on individuals. The legal authority in such cases is to arrest, and not the entire Government of India can produce one line of law to show that a man or boy can be beaten on the spot, or in a lock-up—and then not be brought to trial.

Under what law did a British police sergeant, in my presence in Calcutta on the evening of September 11, at the corner of the Clive Street and Harrison Road, strike a shop-keeper seated cross-legged in his own shop front? I say nothing about the dispersal of the student demonstrators on that occasion. I am asking for evidence of police authority to beat persons who had nothing to do with the demonstration.

At Siddapur on September 1 last, 15 women, two girls of seven and nine and a boy, were "detained" by the police because they marched into the town carrying Congress flags and Mahatma Gandhi's portrait. Of course they broke the law, and quite possibly their demonstration was "arranged by Congress" for my benefit—vide, Sir Samuel Hoare in the House of Commons. The Magistrate assured me that they were

“detained” and not “arrested”. He heard the Sub-Inspector of Police answer my formal but quite unnecessary question whether they had assaulted the police or resisted arrest—I mean “detention”. They had not. They had marched in front of the police to the lock-up, and while so marching they were caned from behind! Under what legal authority, I ask? The Magistrate could not enlighten me. He could only say when I pinned him down that they were beaten to show other women they must not do such things. But Circle Inspector Mangoli was rather cynical about it. He did not see the caning, though he had heard the shouts and the cries. He did not go to the lock-up with us and hear the police admissions before the Magistrate, nor examine the freshly beaten women. The Inspector gave me a lot of political history—most of it inaccurate—and then told me of a case investigated by Mr. Clee, Secretary to the Home Department of Bombay, in which one woman had beaten quite a number of her companions in order to defame the police. I thanked Mr. Mangoli most courteously.

There was a legal authority behind the action of the police at Ankola on the same day, September 1, in smashing their canes and lathis on a large crowd that had assembled to see me, even though the crowd was perfectly orderly, according to what the Magistrate told me. The crowd should not have assembled. It was an “unlawful assembly”, even if the Governor has been the visitor; though had he been coming to a Loyalty League meeting, everything would have been all right.

Under what statute, or section of any Ordinance, were the stationers' shops at Surat ordered by the police to refrain from exhibiting or offering for sale New Year calendars bearing certain photographs? What was the legal authority under which the police took away stocks of such calendars from shop-keepers who had bought and paid for them? I say nothing about the political danger of allowing Indians to gaze on a badly printed picture of a man, or men, whose names are on all their lips, but I am engaged at this moment on a legal enquiry.

Miss Ellen Wilkinson and Mr. Menon, two of the Delegation, got some of that "accurate information" of which Sir Samuel Hoare has spoken from Mr. Kothawala, Acting District Magistrate of Surat. He said it was absolutely false that motor bus proprietors were ordered to fly the Union Jack on their cars. He denied positively that persons wearing white caps were prohibited under police orders from riding in buses. It is a good thing my colleagues were not "disposed to credit" this official statement. A week later Miss Whately and I proved that both reports were absolutely correct. At Navsari we found the buses flying Union Jacks, and with the police hanging around, and C. I. D. Sub-Inspector Bawa Mian very agitated, the busmen—one and all—declared that the flags were on the bonnets of the cars at police orders. Incidentally, all flew from American cars; three were upside down, and the newest flag was "Made in Japan". That is all good.

for British trade and prestige, but I still want to know the law about it. At Sayan the bus proprietors said they had given an undertaking in writing not to carry "white caps". They decline to let one of our guides with a Gandhi cap get in a bus, and said they would not carry me if I put on a white cap. Meanwhile, Head Constable Jeysingh Shavsingh had arrested three youths for appearing in the town wearing white caps and offering such things for sale, as well as photographs of every well-known Indian. The Head Constable said that was the charge. I said to him:—"Under what section of the Criminal Amendment Act, Criminal Procedure Code, or the emergency Powers Ordinances, do you arrest them?", and the brave fellow replied:—"I don't know the law. I have my instructions from the Sub-Inspector at Olpad". How could Shavsingh answer a question that no Chief Justice in India could answer? Mr. Kothawala may not know all that goes on in his area. That is the most charitable conclusion at which I could arrive.

If the authorities do not believe the evidence I have—and again I challenge them to dispute it in so many instances where I have the police admissions that what I was told was substantially correct—let them call up any of the dozens of non-Congress informants whose names I can give. Why not ask Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas—British Government's nominee on behalf of Indian Commerce at the Round Table Conference—to tell the story he told me and four others

about the police methods of collecting land revenue in one area of Bombay Presidency? It is a painful commentary on another bit of "accurate information" which our Delegation was not disposed to credit.

(The Hindu, January 18, 1933.)

NO. IX.—CONCLUSIONS

My reference in the last article to Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas has a bearing on what we were told at Poona on August 21 by Mr. Clee, Secretary to the Home Department.

Mr. Clee is, if he will allow me to say so without any suggestion of patronage, one of the best-informed, serious, and humane-minded officials I have ever met. He had no illusions about Congress being crushed and the political unrest being smothered, though he was quite right in declaring that the Government had the situation well under control. Mr. Clee cited, as evidence of success, that payment has been made of four years arrears of land revenue in the Bardoli district which had formerly been the storm-centre of the no-rent campaign. He rather suggested that the payment had been willingly made.

Well, we subsequently visited Gujerat and intruded on Bardoli, and I can now assure Mr. Clee that most of the land revenue arrears were obtained by coercive methods—he may not know of them. The

story told by Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas is one Mr. Clee had better hear when that gentleman returns to India. I will not repeat it, because it is right that a distinguished Indian knight should recite it himself. He will receive more credence than an undistinguished journalist who breaks some Indian law every time he taps his typewriter. But I do not want to be told that the villagers of Bardoli paid up of their own volition.

The anticipated official answer to or apology for the very limited evidence I have given from the mass at my disposal is, "Well, in India we have a difficult task, and so have the police. The Government must insist on its authority and it must collect its revenue." That I do not dispute. But I have said that one of the major objectives of our visit was to ascertain the true character of the repression, and another was to examine Britain's relationship to India under the present peculiar conditions. Both those objectives were reached, and the facts are to be stated for the enlightenment of the British public, under-informed and frequently grossly misinformed about India.

By all means let the officials and the Government answer, excuse and apologise, but when they seek to deny a little caution is advisable. I do not object to Government, officials and police, doing anything they like to extenuate their policy and actions. There is a type of honesty which I understand. It says:- "We do what we like and the people must put up with it. In any case law-breakers are not entitled, in our

opinion, to any grievance, and only scant justice such as we determine. The others must suffer, and we have taken care to impose silence. We get our revenue as we can. We do not harass the police as to their methods of collection, nor bother too much when they do such things as you say they do. They are a big force. They operate in remote districts, and we cannot be as meticulous as you with all your enquiries of what is legal and what is extra-legal. Certain things must happen and we are not going to argue about them."

For me that would largely do, but unfortunately it is not the official case as presented to the British people by the Secretary of State for India. He tells a vastly different tale. I also object to Sir Samuel Hoare being put up to make allegations he cannot substantiate against a Delegation that can substantiate every fact it adduces. Personally I might pardon his ignorance, but not his impudence, when he implies that in my professional capacity which I have followed for a lifetime I am, in respect of conditions in India, an unreliable reporter. Nobody in any part of the world has yet succeeded in proving me inaccurate in reporting.

The position in India is definitely what one might well expect it to be, as I said at the outset. Repression reigns supreme. Congress is not crushed, but driven underground. No change has taken place in the minds of the people at large as to their political requirements, but a very big change has taken place in their hearts in relation to the British Government.

Prestige—that thing on which so much store is set by so many thoughtless persons—remains only in the shape of Fear and I am not sure that that condition does not entirely satisfy most of the officials. Tens of thousands of Indian men and women, and boys and girls, are in goal for that which is a virtue in England and a vice in India. Nobody suggests that there is any social or other stigma in being in prison to India to-day, and as a punitive measure imprisonment has entirely lost its force. As a deterrent it is almost valueless. Indeed, the officials know perfectly well that Indians regard it as an honour and use imprisonment for more propaganda. That is why the strange restrictions on the Press made it an offence for newspapers to print the names of arrested persons, though thousands of their fellows know all about the arrest.

What the outcome of it all will be I am not presuming to discuss in these articles. As one who believes, after hard travel and painful investigation, that the Indian peoples have decidedly a strong case against the policy that is being pursued, and was pursued—I am ashamed to say—by the Labour Party Government, I believe that that case should be boldly stated by those who know it. As one who believes sincerely that the Indian peoples have not lost any of the affection and goodwill they once had toward the British as a race, I would like to see the policy changed at once, but I am afraid it will not be. There is a British conscience, if not a British public opinion. It

is to that conscience that my colleagues and I of the India League Delegation are endeavouring to appeal, but out of my own honest conviction I am bound to say that the appeal will only slowly sink in and that in the meantime the Indians must suffer, and suffer largely in silence.

But that again is the story that history teaches, along with so much else that in these articles I have tried to make plain even to those who sneer.

(The Hindu, January 24, 1933.)

3. Miss Wilkinson's views :

(a) REPLY TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE'S ATTACK

Can anything remove the ostrich-complex from the British official mind ? If anyone comes back from a country which he dislikes, and says things about it of which he disapproves, then, be it Minister or Civil Servant, he simply refuses to listen. "You have only been shown what the Bolsheviks, the Indian Congress, the Ukrainians (whatever is the pet annoyance of that particular area) wanted you to see."

That Russian Minister who built cardboard villages along the Volga to soothe his Empress's conscience did a good turn for all succeeding bureaucrats. He presented them with the perfect excuse of the ages.

There was "cardboard village building" to create a good impression during the visit of the India League Delegation to India, and it was done by the Government.

Frankly, I was surprised they took so much trouble about it but here is a sample.

Mr. Menon and I went into the Frontier area. Without our asking for any help, cars were placed at our disposal and the Political Agent was sent to guide our steps. We accepted this kindness gratefully. It meant seeing the sight—and Khyber is some sight to see. But it also meant that we could not see the things we had come thousands of miles to see—the conditions of life of the ordinary people. So one morning, we slipped out before dawn, our guide a schoolboy, half Muslim, half English, just returned from an English public school.

POLICE AT MARDAN

We went right into the interior to the town of Mardan. News travels fast amongst the Afridis, and they crowded into the place to meet us. I looked down from the roof of a local magnate's guest house on the packed crowd in the narrow closed lane. If the police shot into the crowd.....I implored our schoolboy guide to get them away.

A few words from one of their own leaders and the lane was cleared as if with a broom. We were left with some 40 of the more important men of the place,

packed round us in the stifling heat. Some minutes after the crowd had gone, a dozen armed Indian policemen marched into that lane. I thanked Heaven we had got the crowd away first.

After we had heard their stories the tribesmen salaamed and left us.

As soon as the first group got out of the street door into the lane, they were set upon by the police.

(Here Miss Wilkinson gives certain graphic details of the attack.—Ed.)

They were completely unarmed, and the only resistance they could put up was to try and shield their heads from the lathi blows. They were then pushed back into the courtyard.

Suddenly an Indian in mufti arrived on a bicycle. There was a sharp order. The police formed into twos and marched away, leaving us in complete possession. I couldn't understand why.

AGENT'S EXPLANATION

We drove back to Peshawar in great indignation at this completely unprovoked assault on our unarmed and inoffensive guests.

The Political Agent, worried as to why we had left his guiding hand, came in haste to see us. He assured us that what we had seen was no police outrage. The Red Shirts had stolen police uniforms and beaten up their own people "to stage an atrocity."

"A police ballet." I laughed, it seemed too comic that we should be asked to believe such a yarn, but this is evidently the account of the incident that has reached Sir Samuel Hoare.

The sequel is the most interesting part. The following morning I saw Mr. Adam (the Inspector-General of Police). Mr. Acheson (then Deputy, now Acting Chief Secretary) and Major Searle (the Deputy Commissioner of the Mardan district).

I asked each in turn : "Were those police really only Red Shirts dressed-up?" Each replied: "Of course not," but Mr. Acheson said, "I do not think you have treated us fairly. If you had told us where you were going, we should have given the strictest instructions that no beating was to take place while you were there!"

Major Searle said: "As soon as we knew you were there, word was sent to withdraw the police."

CHALLENGE TO SIR SAMUEL

Sir Samuel Hoare can confirm this from his own official sources. I have every reason for personal gratitude for the kindness and hospitality shown to us in Peshawar, but if any charge of staging is to be made who did the staging there?

The Secretary of State accuses me of having seen only the Home Member at Delhi, Mr. Haig. With that superbly diplomatic and intelligent gentleman, I

enjoyed two hours of some of the most interesting conversations I had in India. He talked more sense about the Indian trade situation than Whitehall is likely to hear in weeks. But in addition to the Great ones at Delhi, we talked to the British officials in every out of the way place to which we went. I have come back from India with a good-sized admiration for these men keeping somehow sane amid all their worries, and yet able to talk good-humouredly and sympathetically, to stray visitors who blew in from England.

But I was living with Indians in Indian houses. The contrast between the talk on my host's verandah, and the informal discussions over the English teacups filled me with despair. In no other way can anyone realise how deep is the gulf that has widened between India and Britain.

WHAT THEY DON'T KNOW

Crops, and irrigation and land revenue the British official knew all about. What he did not know, and now a days bitterly did not want to know, was what was going on inside the head of those Indians outside his immediate circle of officials and servants, and the other dependents on his favour.

I can understand only too well why the young official who has sweated through those monsoon days we experienced (at least, Sir Samuel, we were not cold weather visitors) feels that the non-cooperating Indian is an ungrateful seditious. But seeing there are so

many tens of thousands of them now—twenty thousand at least of their leading people in goal—how far will that bring a solution either to India or for Britain?

Sir Samuel Hoare can scoff at our delegation. That matters little. But his attitude is symptomatic of that official view which filtering from White-hall through Delhi to the humblest district officer, is responsible for much of the tragedy in India to-day. If officials refused to listen to the facts that are thrust upon even the casual tourist in India, what hope is there of a peace based on mutual trust and understanding?

Meanwhile British trade with India is falling; more and more avenues to our goods are being closed. Sir Samuel may convince a Tory House of Commons that the country is in a state of placid contest until the inevitable explosion crowd, the House for yet another futile Indian debate. And the world looks on and wonders what has happened to British statesmanship.

(Swarajya, December 29, 1932.)

Referring to a statement made by the Secretary for India (Sir Samuel Hoare) in the House of Commons that the delegation was not disposed to credit accurate information when supplied to it, that it had been "spoon-fed" by Congress, and had had its programme stage-managed, Miss Wilkinson said that Sir Samuel Hoare was not in a position to deny what the delegation saw of the police beating outrages, nor was it true

that they saw no English people except the Viceroy and a few others and refused to accept the help of interpreters and others. Only on two occasions was proffered help refused. Apart from that they were taken round most of the time by political agents of the British Government and it was only because they felt they wanted to see a certain part of the North-west Frontier and were not being shown it that they slipped out on their own. When she complained of the police beating completely inoffensive people the answer given to her was that if she had said she was going to that particular place strict instructions would have been given that no beating took place while she was there. In their journey of just under 12,000 miles they met English officials in every area and saw the work that was being done by all classes of the community.

THE BOYCOTT

In Bombay they were taken to the cloth market and shown the English street. They found the whole of the English section completely dead. Most of the shops were empty where thousands of yards of English goods should have been on sale. And that was only a small point of the problem of the boycott, which meant so much to Manchester and Lankashire. In whatever town and village they went the same state of things was found. They talked with merchants in the bazars

and were taken into back premises—many of them belonging to traders who were not Congress people but ordinary traders not concerned with politics—and were shown shelf upon shelf of Manchester goods tied up with string and sealed with the Congress seal. Not one yard of those goods could be sold while the present Ordinances were in operation.

Since those Ordinances came into force on January 4, 90,000 people had gone through the prisons, including nearly all the leaders of Indian influence, not all of them Congress people. There was hardly a village except in remote areas where some one had not been put in prison under the Ordinances. It was true enough that as a result all largescale demonstrations had been stopped. But what was happening was something far more dangerous from the British point of view. Instead of the movement being driven underground and taking the form of terrorism, it was establishing in the hearts of the people a grim determination to use against Britain their one effective weapon, that of trade.

The political movement too, had been driven into two places where politicians were not usually found—the ranks of the women and the villages. In the remotest villages the leadership of Gandhi was recognised. All this was making the boycott more effective.

In the journey she met many women, living quiet and secluded lives, who were well able to buy the most

expensive of foreign cloths, but were now fanatical about them and insisted on being in home spun.

(*Manchester Guardian—Swarajya, January 20, 1933.*)

(b) LECTURE AT GENEVA

At a conference held in Geneva on the 23rd of March, '32, Miss H. Wilkinson gave a short but substantial account of the India League 'Delegation's enquiry in India; she said it had been found necessary to send a delegation because the Press in Europe was not giving an accurate account of the real state of things, and only first-hand information would convince the public.—The delegation had spent 3½ months in the country and had covered 15,000 miles from North to South and East to West. They had made a point of visiting the rural areas and getting into close contact with the villagers who represent 97 per cent of the total population of India. She described their appalling misery and said how tragic it was for them to have to pay taxes under those conditions.

The finest work done by the Congress said Miss Wilkinson, was no doubt the social activities undertaken in the villages; fresh hopes and new organisations had sprung up. The English administration's efficiency had over-centralised the country and the former village organisations had been disturbed and not replaced.

The Congress work corresponded to a long felt want. It had brought to the villagers the gospel of Gandhi, which they could understand, and the means of increasing their meagre resources by work in their time of leisure. The Government must be blamed still more for having stopped this constructive work than for putting people in prison. Miss Wilkinson talked of the Congress Ashramas and described those she had visited, many of them having been raided by the police, their looms broken and all their material confiscated.

As a result of the repressive policy, a great many of the Congress activities have been driven underground against the desire of Gandhi, who has always advocated open action—Mass demonstration in the streets are not at all so frequent as they used to be at one time, but the members of the India League delegation nevertheless witnessed some of them.—Miss Wilkinson also gave some particulars about the Ordinances and their application. She also spoke of the faith of the young Indian men and women in the liberation of their country.

Miss Wilkinson also spoke of Gandhi as a political chief. He had succeeded not only because he had built his policy on ideas which are in harmony with the Indian traditions, but because the very nature of his action made it almost impossible for the English to overpower his spiritual authority.

Moreover said Miss Wilkinson, it was difficult for any Englishman to understand somebody who

refuses to compromise. England had been faced by Gandhi and by thousands of his determined disciples. Most of those people were very poor and they wished to remain poor: They often possessed nothing else but simple clothes they were wearing, but every one of them was ready to sacrifice his life and to go on saying: "No," with a tenacious determination. What could a government do again such people? Miss Wilkinson visited Gandhi during his fast and she drew a very moving picture of the scenes that took place then. At that time, she said everybody was ready to compromise,—except Gandhi.—He remains the only power with which an armed government cannot deal.—Nevertheless, he had always been ready to negotiate and build a bridge across divergent points of view,—providing sufficient real understanding is shown, which, as we know, has not always been the case.

Miss Wilkinson had also been asked to give her opinion on the coming Indian Constitution. She briefly recalled the work done by the three successive sessions of the Round Table Conference, and the fight that was carried on to ensure provision for a Central government, responsible to the Legislature. She could not be expected in the short time at her disposal to make an extensive review and criticism of the White Paper. She would just indicate some points which appeared particularly important to her.

First of all, the present proposals considerably strengthened the Viceroy's powers.

Secondly the actual realisation of Federation was dependent on two conditions (relative to the Princes) the fulfilment of which must be almost indefinitely postponed.

No time limit is fixed for the application of the reforms.

The Viceroy is to be guided by the ministers' advice, but he need not listen to them at all if he prefers not to.

No effective control of the Ministers by the Legislature has been provided for. They are nominated by the Governor, who really retains the power.

Miss Wilkinson gave some details about the transferred and reserved subjects, and especially about Finance. Although this is not a reserved subject, nominally speaking the framing of the budget and the real power practically remain with the Governors and the Viceroy.

Miss Wilkinson concluded by quoting article 90 of the proposals: "Any Act assented to by the Governor or by the Governor-General will within twelve months be subject to disallowance by His Majesty in Council." This means that even if the whole of the country wants a law, even if the Provincial and the Federal Legislatures have voted it, even if the Provincial Governors and the Viceroy have agreed to it, the Bill can be disallowed in London. Such measures are a bitter disappointment to those Indians who had entertained sincere hopes in the White Paper and they feel that the fight has to be continued.

PRIVATE COMMITTEE MEETING

On the 24th morning, a private meeting of the international Committee was held, and it was decided to send two short resolutions to the English Prime Minister and to the Secretary of State for India, one of these resolutions concerning the Meerut trial and the other the White Paper. They were drafted as follows:

(1) "This Conference of the International Committee on Indian Affairs has learnt with profound disquiet the heavy sentences passed on the Meerut prisoners after an unduly protracted trial, for the organising of Trade Unions among Indian workers. It urges the British Government for the sake of the good name of Britain among the Nations to secure their immediate release."

(2) "The Conference of the International Committee on Indian affairs having considered the White paper, and having noted the over-whelming nature of the safeguards for imperial rule that are therein provided, expresses the hope that on the coming discussions on the Bill to be laid before the Parliament, provision will be made for a real measure of self-government for India. It urges the release of all political prisoners, so that all the real leaders of the Indian masses can take part in the discussion on terms of complete equality."

(The Hindu, April 12, 1933.)

CHAPTER II

IMPRESSIONS

1. Miss Wilkinson in an Indian Village :

That suitcase filled with medicines that I lugged sixteen thousand miles is typical of the British ignorance of India. As soon as my friends know I was going there—and in the hot season too—they presented me with every tropical remedy the wit of the chemist could suggest, assuming that of course, no medicine should be purchased east of Suez. To be ready for the worst, I added a variety of insecticides as though no shop in India had thought of stocking such things, I derived great moral comfort on the voyage out from a bottle labelled “Miss Mary Pickford M. P.’s prescription.” I didn’t know what it was meant for, but after all, Miss Pickford had come back safe, and at the worst I could not drink the whole bottleful and hope for the rest.

After three months in India, where incidentally I found excellent chemist’s shops in every town, I know now that the rooted Western idea that Indians live in a state of dirt and semisavagery would be highly comic if it did not have such tragic political results.

MISSIONARIES AND OTHERS.

Despite Miss Mayo, and the ladies who can only be happy with h. and c. and a pukka bathroom, I found the Indian village could be a quite comfortable place to stay in. Of course, there are bad spots. The returning traveller who wants the delicious flattery of, "My dear, how could you possibly stand it?" naturally makes the most of these Missionaries with the best intentions of raising funds for their work have set the fashion. Indian villages compared to any Western standard are dreadfully poor, and there are villagers in Bihar and United Provinces which are on the verge of famine owing to the failure of the rains.

But a civilised people—and in some ways the Indians are almost too civilised—do not live in a country for three or four thousand years without finding out how to make themselves reasonably comfortable therein, if they have any means at all.

It is a pity that more Westerners do not go and live with the people, instead of looking at them through spiritual lorgnettes. Mud huts with floors polished with cow-dung sound perfectly awful. But Just come along with me to the house of a rather better-off peasant of the South. The mud walls, made out of the country's soil, are thick and cool. The courtyard where the rough kitchen work is being done is definitely dirty. Taxes that should go for drainage pay for the main roads that the townsmen need and the growing

army of police. The thatched verandah is cool and shady. Accompanying my hostess into her living-room, I take off my muddy shoes instinctively, for the floor, newly polished with cow-dung, shines like pottery.

In the face of all horrified English housewives I have to insist the cow-dung does make an excellent polish used as the Indian woman knows how.

Brass vessels gleam in the dim interior. Of course, there isn't much light, but after a morning in the burning sun-glare that is a boon for which one's tired eyes do their own little weep of gratitude.

HOW TO BATHE.

Would I like a bathe? Blessed woman, she takes me into a paved little outhouse. There is a big brass vessel of cool water, a dipper and a hole in the wall for drainage. As I sluice the fresh water over myself it dawns upon me that the Western method is not really the cleanest way of taking a bath.

Refreshed, I come in for a meal. We squat on little wooden platforms. Because we are in Southern India the food is served on fresh plantain leaves, destroyed immediately after the meal. My courteous host tells me that in India the guest is from God, and his food is cooked with the fire of the host's heart. "The Europeans have their food cooked by English Brahmins," said the wife loftily. "That is a pity for them."

"English Brahmin," I was told, is the sarcastic term for untouchables employed [as cooks by English mem-sahibs because they don't mind washing up, an operation which the Brahmin considers should be done by someone else. He has my sympathy, but one can also see the mem-sahibs' point of view.

After an excellent lunch—and he who hasn't tasted halwa (a wheat dish with raisins) cooked by a South Indian Brahmin has something for life still to give him—we stroll round the sleepy village. The potter obligingly wakes from sleep to show us the skill of his thin fingers. The carpenter has a long discussion about the difficulties of being a Brahmin when the Government insists on collecting taxes in money. The village tank looks deceptively clean in the sunshine. The women on the steps manage to get a bath and wash their clothes behind an ingenious arrangement of their saris, which would preserve the modesty even of a Brighton Town Councillor.

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CHARPOYS FOR SLEEP.

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When evening comes it is too hot.....an August night.....to sleep in the mud house. The men take their charpoys (the light Indian bed which can be carried in one hand) into the compound. The guest is given the whole verandah for her charpoy. Every traveller carries a roll of bedding in India. It simplifies things, and make the hostess's task easier. Someone unrolls the bedding and fixes a mosquito curtain.

Someone else lights incense sticks. Then, if the moon is not too bright, one drops asleep under an Edmund Dulac-blue sky.

The English, some miles along the road, are sleeping with all the expensive apparatus of civilisation, stone walls, punkhas, pukka beds. It all seems rather fussy, though I know that my soft-eyed hostess would insist on all these things if her husband had the money to pay for them.

IN THE BAZAARS.

Next morning I went to go shopping with her in the bazaar. But no Indian high caste woman, even if poor, would be seen doing for her own shopping. Goods have to be brought to her home for choosing. So I collect a couple of amused males, and create a sensation in the shopping street. An English mem-sahib does not wander round the bazaar, especially with Indians who are obviously friends and not servants. I had so often been told of the lovely things to be bought for a trifle in Indian bazaars, but alas, it is easier to investigate the hidden problems of Hindu politics than to walk out of an Indian host's house to shop in the bazaar, except, of course, in the big towns. When you can get to them, Indian shops are really fascinating. Here is an Aladdin's cave of coloured glass bangles that cost about a farthing each. I bought stacks of them and in awkward moments when I had to make conversation in a zenana without an interpreter, I

discovered the lingua franca of the bangle. Every Indian woman wears bangles, and it is fun to admire each other's. But I learnt too late that I had rather shocked some of the gentle ladies because the brightly coloured toys I had chosen are only bought by women of the depressed classes.

Mr. Gandhi may fast against untouchability and the great-hearted women of the nationalist movement have done wonders in improving standards and removing barriers to temples and wells. But can even Mr. Gandhi control the sight raising of a delicate eye-brow, the meaning that an Indian high-caste woman can put into the movement of a hand?

(Swarajya, 1932.)

2. Mr. J. Milner, M.P.

I am not one of those who, after three months in India, feel competent to express an opinion on every subject under its blazing sun. Particularly is this so when one's time and opportunity has been so circumscribed as has been the case with those of us who have been serving on the Franchise Committee and whose energies have been largely taken up with the one specific duty of assisting in devising a more widespread and equitable system than has hitherto been in operation.

Nor need I take up space in elaborating upon those physical characteristics of India which must necessarily leave a permanent impression on the mind of one visiting India for the first time.

It is true that like many and probably most Englishmen who have in the past taken India and its future too much as a matter of course I have been amazed at its immensity at its enormous population and the diversity of climate religion and speech. At the same time I see many similarities between conditions in India and conditions in my own country.

SIMILARITIES

I see the same—and indeed greater—much greater—extremes of wealth and poverty and the same regard for material as against spiritual and moral interests and forces.

I have visited India's legislatures both Central and Provincial and I recognise amongst her public men and women the same types we have in England, and I see amongst many—not all—of those at present in authority, both Indian and British, the same tendencies to preserve and extend vested interests. There is little if any differences in education, knowledge or capacity between the governing classes in India and in England as one has been led to believe. Much has been said of illiteracy in India but illiteracy still persists amongst some of the poorer people in Britain to-day as to

divisions of class though not of caste. The difference in both is in degree.

The people of India like the common people throughout the world desire peace, amenities, economic security and opportunity and a reversal of that age-old state of society which prevents men and women developing the best that is in them as expressed in power for social and economic improvement and change.

In India to-day one's perspective is blurred by the over-whelming pre-occupation of the politically-minded people with the problem of nationalism and self-government. It is in my view a little doubtful how far the masses in the rural areas are yet affected by these feelings but in the towns there can be no doubt of the fact. When that problem or series of problems are disposed of one may hope to see Indian thought and energy diverted to other channels but let it be said quite plainly that it will not be sufficient to have merely a change of masters.

There must not only be a radical alteration in the mode of government or the composition of legislatures but an uprising of the spirit of common people before there can be that change of heart which in India no less than elsewhere, is the great necessity of the times.

THE MASSES

The great mass of the people in India are, as yet too much under the necessity of earning their daily

bread, of keeping body and soul together, to appreciate and take advantage of the opportunity which will shortly be before them. The time will however come though it may be after much tribulation when they will emerge from their present chrysalis stage of development in political matters.

REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS.

As one brought up on western traditions I am naturally a believer in representative institutions though, let us admit it, they are not yet if indeed in the nature of things they ever can be, a panacea for all the ills of the body politic. They do however form a basis on which the peoples of India themselves, like those of other lands, within the British Commonwealth of Nations can build up a framework on which they may work out their own destiny. It is of the utmost, nay of the most vital importance that the steps to that end should at once be taken.

I cannot speak for those now in authority in England but the truth of that statement is from my own knowledge well recognised by those in the highest position in India. It is for those of us in Parliament who have seen India for ourselves to let our own views be known in England in the proper quarters without doubt or question.

I shall not be expected to comment in this place upon the present regrettable state of political affairs in

India. Suffice it to say that those of us who have visited India with open eyes have not been blind to the obvious necessity of a change. A change—let it be fairly said on both sides—; but a change in which, directly or indirectly, the Government must of necessity take the initiative.

FRANCHISE COMMITTEE'S TASK

The Franchise Committee—without distinction of race or party—have endeavoured to contribute something to India of which India can herself make use; we have at the same time not been neglectful of opportunities of another sort, and the happy association of the British members with our Indian colleagues on the committee—all of whom have had with us the same heart-felt desire to contribute whatever in us lay—and with all those whom we have met both officially and unofficially—is the best augury that an early, a not only generous but a just transfer of power to India may yet appease those feelings which have been aroused and bring a freer, a happier and a more contented people within the brotherhood of nations.

If I may add one personal touch I would say how much I have been impressed by the interest which all classes in India take in the future of the British Labour Party. That interest will help to sustain the party to fight on, whatever be its present temporary obscurity, until in truth as well as in name it holds the reins of office and power. Meanwhile and at all times the

party will keep India in active and sympathetic remembrance and association.

(Leader.—Swarajya, Thurs day, June 2, 1932.)

3. Top-heavy administration :

The universal lapse in political morality since the war, has shown itself in India in 'inflation' of the higher ranks of the service. The administration begins by being grossly top-heavy at Delhi; and provincial Governments have to follow suit. The whole of the East acutely feels its poverty to-day. The world-wide economic stress has not as yet come close to the average British official in India. He does not begin to realise how hard-up we are in England. The false security of his life is a screen between him and his facts. As for the theory, that you have to impress by show, the truth is that our whole Indian Empire would be securer for some austerity in high places. All the essentials of the most comfortable life that India can give, can be had on a much lower scale of salaries (as the many soldiers and officials, who do their service on salaries that the Secretariates would consider penurious, know) that the top men demand. This conviction that the administration is needlessly expensive is never going to die down again: nor is that other conviction that India is getting poorer value for her money than she used to

get. Economic troubles need much more searching examination than the existing system of Government will ever give them.

*(Manchester Guardian—Swarajya, Friday,
April 8, 1932.)*

4. The Indian Impasse :

The Government has reached an impasse and calls it a victory. Just as in Ireland Mr. Lloyd George boasted that he 'had murder on the run' and then a few months later treated on equal terms with the 'murderers' who became very efficient and respectable members of the Cosgrave Government, so sooner or later the British Government must treat with Gandhi and recognise Congress. For Congress, as Lord Irwin repeated in his lecture in Canada last week is more and more the mouthpiece of Hindus. Increasingly, like the proscribed Dail in Ireland during the period of the Black and Tans, Congress gathers authority from its proscription. Just as the Dail met secretly and in cellars, so delegates from all parts of India came to Delhi for the banned session of Congress. They met in spite of the police. It was a ten minutes' session in one of the main streets of Delhi. They had time to reaffirm their policy and their confidence in Mr. Gandhi. So far violence is not very much in their thoughts and murders are still isolated acts confined to a few districts.

There is still a mass of good-will towards England in India. Under the rule of the Ordinances that are ably justified in a few districts, if it regards the recognition of the real leaders of Indian opinion as beneath its pride, then the constitution, now nearly ready for acceptance, will be so much waste-paper. 'Self-Government' means Government by the people whom the Indians themselves desire to govern them: if the Government cannot realise that and pocket its pride, all hope of peace in India is over.

*(The New Statesman—Swarajya, Monday,
May 23, 1932.)*

5. Mr. Hales, M.P. on present situation :

"The Indian problem ought to be settled in India. It was a mistake to have fixed London as the venue of discussions. I am not surprised that the Indian Question is yet in the melting pot. If I had my way, I should lock up in a room representative leaders of India and refuse them an exit until they arrive at a satisfactory solution of their own affairs. And, the British Government should simply ratify the unanimous agreement. Even now it is not too late."

In these words, Mr. H. K. Hales, Conservative M. P., for Haleigh Division expressed himself in the course of an exclusive interview to "Forward."

Mr. Hales who is touring in India advanced the claim that he was about the only member amongst six hundred and odd people in the British House of Commons who understood India and could speak in her name.

“Why, I can claim to be the Member for India” added Mr. Hales, “my claim should be much more legitimate than the late Charles Bradlaugh’s for the very simple reason that I have lived in this country for over seventeen years and have watched with sympathy and understanding India’s hopes and struggle in the political, social and economic spheres.”

IF HE WERE THE VICEROY !

Mr. Hales continued to say that if he were the Viceroy of British India, he should summon immediately a Conference of Indian leaders and see to the final settlement of the Indian Question.

The Member of Hanleigh admitted that the opposition in India to the White Paper was wider and much more genuine than people in Great Britain would credit for. Yet, he professed to be surprised: it struck him that the opposition in India only went to strengthen the dominance of the reactionary counsels in Great Britain represented by the Churchill Group which also opposed those Reforms.

Asked why, in his opinion, the phrase “Dominion Status for India” which was freely expressed in all

state documents since 1929 beginning with Lord Irwin's declaration prior to the Round Table Conference had been suddenly dropped Mr. Hales denied that the object was to cheat India of her legitimate rights. He was of opinion that in the early stages of discussion in the present era, the phrase: "Dominion Status" was used as signifying Home Rule. Nobody ever thought or expected that a Constitution on the lines of Canada or South Africa was going to be conferred immediately upon India. Dominion Status as an ideal was accepted by the people and the Government of Great Britain and was not likely to be repudiated.

"If you mean to ask", said Mr. Hales, why in the recent evidence of the Secretary of State before the Joint Committee of Parliament the Secretary of State for India avoided the use of this expression, all I can say is that Sir Samuel Hoare is a man of his word and is about the last person to indulge in a phrase or idiom which he does not mean. That he sticks to the White Paper Offer in spite of the growing opposition from the Churchill Group should be proof enough that the Secretary for India is a dependable person. In any case, more phraseology cannot indeed should not, have much of significance in the matter of fact world of to-day."

NEW REFORMS: WHEN?

Mr. Hales proceeded to say that he agreed with the prophecy of Sir Nripendra Nath Sarkar that the proposed Constitution was not likely to function in the

provinces before the end of 1935 and in the centre a year or two later. He however would not support the idea of a general election now although he agreed that, constitutionally speaking, the present legislative Councils had, by virtue of the extension of their legal term of life ceased to be representative of the public opinion in the country. The only reason why he did not think a general election possible now was that the country was passing through an economic depression. He feared that the constitutional gain to be derived from a general election at the present moment would not be commensurate with the economic loss in terms of money. Mr. Hales admitted however that the agitation for an immediate solution of the legislatures stood on the firm ground.

Questioned regarding the proposed Federal Government Mr. Hales agreed that the proposed type would mean that the princes of India would simply domineer, but he was convinced that the Federal Government of the proposed kind was never going to materialise "not at least in the near future."

"For," Mr. Hales declared, "It should not be forgotten that when these gentlemen of the Princely Order who were pretty Czars in their own States agreed originally to enter the Federation they did so in the belief that the power from the British Crown was going to pass into their own hands. Now with the White Paper proposals however nothing was more unlikely than that the Princes would back out. I should

therefore think that the Federation, in actual practice, if not in law will be federation of British Indian Units."

"LIFT COUNCIL BOYCOTT"

Continuing Mr. Hales deprecated the idea of a boycott of the legislatures. Even if the Reforms should be "inadequate, disappointing and unsatisfactory to use a famous Congress phraseology", Mr. Hales would yet urge upon his friends in India that a policy of abstention was fraught with very grave consequences to the country. For one thing, abstention would result in the return of undesirable men.

I am sure, Mr. Hales added, "that if any argument was necessary for lifting the ban on Council entry, the recent Calcutta Municipal Amendment Bill should afford the strongest argument. I have no desire to comment on the merits of the bill. It may have been necessary. It may not. The point is that a very large number of people I have met declared that the measure ought not to have been passed. Now, if the Swarajists should have been in the Council, it is unthinkable that such a bill as this one could be passed through the legislative anvil. As long as counting of heads is the method whereby public opinion is gauged, it was open to the Swarajists to have made impossible the passage of the bill. I feel that abstention is weakness. I would persuade my Congress friends to revise their policy."

Mr. Hales also dilated for a moment on the necessity for a constitution suited to the genius of India rather than a cheap imitation of what he characterised as a failed model of the west.

MIDNAPORE OUTRAGE.

Concluding Mr. Hales referred to the Midnapore outrage and regretted that the Outrage should have occurred at a moment when India's problems were being discussed threadbare in England. Although the Churchill Group would exploit the incident as an argument against the transference of real power to the people of India, Mr. Hales owed it to himself to confess that the terrorists did not command public sympathy in Bengal or elsewhere. To brand the whole province as a terrorist honey-comb would in his considered opinion, be as unfair as to call England or America a nation of gangsters, "simply because the British and American gangsters are, like their Indian counter-part—the Bengal Revolutionaries—believe in violent methods."

Mr. Hales declared: "I am convinced that the expression of Indian public opinion against the Midnapore Outrage has been unequivocal and unambiguous. The genuineness of the protest can be gauged from the recent resolution of a Midnapore Indian meeting to extend social boycott against those proved to be connected in any way with the dastardly outrage. A saner and surer method of checking terrorism lies not in segregating Bengal in the future scheme of constitutional

reforms but in taking her prominent leaders into confidence and strengthening public opinion which is already decidedly against violence of any kind. That the terrorists form an insignificant minority of just a few handfuls of misguided young men can admit of no doubt. These misguided men must be brought under control. To this end, I fancy, the Congress will have no objection to co-operate with Government. That is why I suggested that Mr. Gandhi should immediately pay a visit to Midnapore and seek to correct the revolutionary mind. I hope that he will accept my suggestion and that Government will co-operate with him in this task."

(Swarajya, October 5, 1933.)

6. Mr. George Lansbury on the Indian Problem :

A socialist Government will have many difficult national questions to deal with. None of these will be more urgent—or less difficult—than the problem of India.

The Labour movement is pledged to grant not self-government only, but self-determination to that great nation. One of the best pieces of work carried through by the Labour Government was setting Mahatma Gandhi free and bringing him as an honoured, welcome member to the Round Table Conference.

I do not object to the criticism of those who say we have no right to claim to have kept our promises to the Indian people when (as they say) we put 50,000 Indians into prison, most of them without trial. There is truth in that.

Even so, Lord Irwin and Wedgwood Benn never forgot that their main task was not coercion, but conciliation. Though they did what all governments do, to maintain order, at the same time they made it clear that they considered the use of force a grim necessity, but understood that force was no remedy.

Even while Gandhiji and his friends were in prison they carried on negotiations under the most difficult conditions, and, finally succeeded in gathering together the most representative conference of Indians ever held.

REJECTED BY ALL

The Labour Government was driven out of office. The India Conference closed down, never to be re-opened on the same representative basis. A Committee representing both Houses of Parliament is considering a White Paper submitted by the Government.

This White Paper represents the proposals which the present Government will embody in legislation for the future government of India.

I do not propose to discuss these proposals. As far as I can gather all that is vocal representatives in

India reject the scheme as quite unsatisfactory. What sense, then, is there in discussing it.

Meantime, I am informed by all my Indian friends and by my English friends who have lately visited India the economic condition of the masses goes from bad to worse; that millions are living lives of malnutrition and semi-starvation.

The British Trade Union movement has done splendid service through its members on the Whitely Commission, and the deputation it has sent to India is proving that, apart from all questions of political change, the social conditions of the workers cry aloud for redress.

NO DENIALS

George Hicks and other Labour M. Ps have impressed this side of Indian life on the attention of the Commons. No one denies the truth of this indictment. The official defence comes to no more than saying, "it might be worse."

I shall not attempt to prove that no Englishman has done any good in India. I gladly pray my tribute of homage and respect to the thousands of men and women who, as Civil Servants, Medical Missionaries, and in many other ways, have done their best to mitigate the ravages wrought by disease, evil customs and starvation.

Even so, in India, as in England, charity which loving hearts bestow can never take the place of justice.

The Salvation Army and other organisations spend huge sums of money here, and give untiring devotion and work, striving to make life more bearable for slum dwellers, but none of us think this is any reason why slums should exist or should prevent us from doing all in our power to sweep the conditions which create slums and destitution off the face of the earth.

When we admire the hard work of these British who have tried to help the Indians, we must remember the true facts about the Indian conditions.

We must bear in mind the fact that every penny of wealth drawn from India to pay salaries, pensions and allowances to the multitude of British officials, soldiers, Civil Servants, and others comes from a nation of 300,000,000 people most of whom live at a standard of life which reduces vitality almost to vanishing point.

Also, let us never forget that in making great reservoirs, building railway tracks and creating the New Delhi, the British take a very considerable toll from India in the shape of interest on the loans and dividends for companies.

FIGURES NOT AVAILABLE

This tribute is almost entirely spent outside India. I have tried to get figures to show what this total drain is, but no actual figures are as yet available. But that a nation so rich and bountiful in the possession of natural resources should be so poverty-stricken,

is a fact that should make every English man have the deepest suspicions.

Roman conquerors settled in the territories. They treated backward nations like ourselves harshly and often inflicted forced labour. But in those days the wealth wrung from the natives was largely spent in the country.

Irish landlordism was one degree worse, because rents were spent abroad, by landlords who never saw their estates. British and French loans to Ismail Pasha, the sometime Khedive to Egypt, were spent likewise in the haunts of gambling and vice outside that country.

Britain, as an imperial power, draws huge sums from India, and this is spent just as absentee landlords would spend it—away from where it is earned. Much of the wealth of all of us comes to us in this way and is, strictly, parasitical.

We shall have to be prepared to give this up and leave the Indians to provide their own Civil Service, army and other services.

REAL MISSION

Whatever certain sections of the Press may say, we do not in fact make India rich and contented. Our rule leaves her desparately poor. Think of the condition of her people, most of whom are illiterate and masses of whom live, as I say, under conditions of semi-starvation.

None of our fathers who conquered India went there to make her prosperous. They went for purposes of robbery with violence, or—with the more civilised—as traders out to make profit. Clive and Warren Hastings, and all the long list of Viceroys, have been expected to foster British prosperity.

From time to time they would stop to assure the Indians that the interests of both nations are identical—just as other people repeat the equally foolish phrase about the interest of capital and labour being the same.

Of course, intelligent people who are intellectually honest know this is quite untrue. Now that India has entered field of Capitalism, and coal-mining is in full swing, Indian capitalists say their first need is protection by means of tariffs against British competition.

GRAVE PROBLEM

The overriding fact which I desire to emphasise is that side by side with the political problem there is the basic economic problem of the condition of the people which means that a Socialist Government in power will have to face the terrific problem how to keep millions of people alive while the future government and administration of India is being settled.

We will be obliged to take on many of the financial burdens now being borne by these starving multitudes and we shall be called upon to spend our own

substance in effort to create a new social order in villages and townships.

None of this work can be efficiently done by aliens, that is, by us. Indians may ask our help, but, in the main, if village life is to be restored and made of service, then the people who alone can do the job will be Indians.

The terrible pity is that young India, like young Ireland during my generation, devotes so much time to politics, that these conditions do not receive the attention they deserve.

Indians will find, as Jawaharlal Nehru had told them, that they must turn their attention to the economic demands of the Indian masses as well as to their political needs.

INDIA'S CHOICE

What, then, is to be Labour's policy over here? Nothing new. We must stick to our oft-repeated statement that it is for India to decide whether she will join us as a partner or break the connection and become a foreign power.

The British governing class has received great benefits from India. The Indian Civil Service, the Native States, the Army, have all found for its sons innumerable well-paid posts and pensions. We ought to be willing to pay back some of the debt we owe.

I am sure that the Socialist movement will only ask for partnership on terms of mutual aid and service to each other. We shall ask that the tie which binds us together will be one not of domination, but of brotherhood.

As to what form the Government of India should take; this must be settled by Indians themselves. There is not the least likelihood that any scheme formulated in London will ever be voluntarily accepted, and in this matter it is imperative that any scheme should be freely worked by Indians.

ONLY SCHEME

All we have to consider, is how we can best secure the drafting of such a scheme. We Socialists have declared that Indians must themselves choose whether to remain with us or not.

How shall we settle this and the question of future government? I have come definitely to the conclusion that Annie Besant's scheme is the only way.

She advocated the plan adopted in relation to Australia. Then Britain gave the Australian States the task of drawing up their Federal Constitution, and merely endorsed it afterwards.

Some years ago, Dr. Besant and a group of representative Indians, with the valuable assistance of our good friend and life-long champion of India, David

Graham Pole, drew up a Commonwealth of India Bill which Harry Snell, John Scurr and myself and others introduced in the House of Commons.

Our contention was that this scheme, with such minor modifications as Parliament should impose, would make a definite advance along the road to Dominion status. But the Bill never got a second reading. Now, years after, Englishmen are drafting schemes which, as I say, and as they know, are certain of rejection.

There is only one way out for a Socialist Government. We should summon, or ask Indians themselves to summon, a constituent assembly and hand over to that assembly the task of deciding the future government of India.

“EXTREMIST” CRY

This is both logical and commonsense. By this means we do give self-determination and self-government. There will certainly be an outcry that “the assembly will be captured by the extremists.”

Certainly, Conservatives will raise that cry. But they will have far worse things to cry about, for our own House of Commons will have been captured by “extremists”—ourselves. Do not let us be frightened by noise.

More serious criticism will come from the people who assure us that the racial and religious sects will never agree. This is not true. The one thing that is

clear from recent history is that an outside power like ourselves never can secure harmony here. Only an Indian State stands any chance of doing so.

The main point for us to make up our minds that we shall be prepared to leave to Indians the task of deciding with whom she will or will not federate, and the sort of federal government she will set up within her own dominions.

THE PLEDGE

She might follow America and set autonomous States, federated with the Centre; or she might choose government from the Centre. This is for them, not for us to decide.

I am certain that if those who speak for the Indian States and India under British rule are once convinced that they have free choice to remain with us or leave us, they will on terms desire to remain. That is, of course, if we have been able to convince them that self-government means that Indians do manage Indian affairs, just as Australia and Canada manage theirs.

All who speak for Britain, from the King to Lord Willingdon, have again and again pledged to the British Parliament to grant full Dominion status to India, and to make her an equal partner of the British Commonwealth of nations.

We of the Labour Party have agreed with this, and have added the further stipulation that such membership must be the free will act of India.

ISSUES SETTLED

Given equal status with all other Dominions, the people of India under the Statute of Westminster have the unequivocal right either to remain with us or go out. The Labour movement, in supporting the right of choice for India, is only asking for her the same rights as those enjoyed by other Dominions.

The issues are already decided and written down in official documents. All we have to do is to make up our minds to do what has been promised.

The sands of time are running out. This nation of 300,000,000 people, occupying territory as large as Europe (without Russia), awaits the coming to power of the Labour Party with its Socialist policy of democracy and freedom. I hope we shall be worthy of their faith and confidence.

TEST OF SUCCESS

We have learned for ourselves that the true test of success in government is not the pomp and majesty of courts, armies and autocrats. The well-being of nations will be found in love and comradeship.

The people of the East are awakening. We are alien in religion and race, yet we eat and drink, wake

and sleep, suffer pain and sickness, poverty and crime together. We are part of each other, children of one father.

It is our God-given opportunity to wipe away the legal and other measures which prevent India entering of her own free will into the family of nations. Let us all see that we do all that in us lies to ensure that opportunity shall not be lost because of ignorance of fear.

(Swarajya, July 4, 1934.)

7. England and India :

MR. VITHALBHAI J. PATEL

Speaking at a reception held in his honour at Chicago the late Mr. Vithalbhair Patel formerly President of the Indian Legislative Assembly said, "America this great power of the west, holds the key to this situation involving world peace. She can unlock the door to it, so to speak, if she will but use it, and she should not look at the matter solely from her own point of view, but should regard it from the point of view of world-wide humanity. Britain has by diplomacy reduced her debt to the United States. While she denies her debt to you, she demands 40 million pounds per year interest alone from India on her so-called debt to England.

"The very while that England has acquired 1000,000 square miles of new territory from the 'world war' she turns on the United States and says 'you Shylock'. England says she intrudes in other lands for the good of other peoples. She is in Ireland for the good of Ireland, she says. Likewise, she is in Egypt, India, South Africa and other places for the 'good' of those peoples.

DE VALERA CAPABLE

"But in President de Valera she has found a new problem, a big one. One that she cannot surmount. As England claims a debt from the Irish nation in the shape of the so-called land annuities, de Valera says "Very well. We shall settle those debts. We shall compare debits and credits. We shall do so before an impartial tribunal, not an English one. We shall not only discuss the debts we may owe England, but we shall determine the debts and the certainty of paying them that England owes Ireland."

"From the labours of the peasants of Burma, Englishmen enjoy an easy life. They invite the Shah of Persia to London and hypnotize him with lavish hospitality while his people pay the bills. England conquers India and then debits the Indian people with the cost of the conquest.

"Already from India 30 thousand millions of pounds have gone to the Bank of England. England

argues that she has 1,500 millions invested in India. But for every dollar invested there, many have been taken away by England for her own benefit. The more we owe England, the more we pay her. The more we pay her the more we owe her, and this process goes on times without end.

“ Brothers and Sisters, I ask you, has the time not come when the world should look into this business of English profits and claims of indebtedness? Shall we not all take this nation England to an impartial tribunal and there ascertain which are the debtor nations and which are the creditor? That is the stand which America should take.

“ And now for disarmament. Unless the nations disarm there shall be no peace. But, my friends, it is foolish to talk of disarmament as long as empires exist. You know that no conquered people can remain reconciled to a foreign rule. Therefore the conquering empire must remain armed, Tripoli, Syria, the Philipines Egypt, Manchuria must sometime cross swords with their conquerors. But imperialist nations, Japan, France the United States must disarm as against one another before there can be peace. But these nations will not disarm so long as Britain demands a monopoly of world trade. England wants reduction of belligerent navies. But she slyly says she needs enough navy of her own to defend 85,000 miles of sea coast. But whose coast line is it? That of subject nations of course.

ENGLAND WON'T DISARM

"Is England prepared for disarmament? Indeed not! At the very instant she signed the late treaty at Washington she said "Our signature is conditioned on the continued integrity of the British empire. Let one inch of that territory be taken from us and the treaty is at an end." So, my friends, the agreement was no agreement. Until every nation is free there will be no disarmament. There are one billion souls under English dominion.

"Let me state a few of the facts in the Indian case: For 150 years England has occupied India. She has issued strong laws there that no one shall possess a gun without an English permit. She has effectively disarmed the whole people.

"Another thing, England keeps 60,000 British soldiers in India at all times. And see how well they pay their representatives there. A Viceroy gets 5,000 dollars per month and an equal and additional amount in expense allowance. Also all high offices are reserved for English persons. When you know that the average income of the Indian is four or five cents per day, you can see the condition brought about by the drain of these high salary taxes."

(Swarajya, January 21, 1933.)

8. Dr. Ceresole on Gandhiji's work :

Dr. Pierre Ceresole, the well-known Swiss Engineer and International Pacifist, in the course of an interview in May 31, '34 said "Mr. Gandhi has developed an atmosphere around him in which people are not afraid to speak out their mind to the very face of us, whom they regard as their leader and teacher. This is just like the Mahatma, who is always anxious to encourage Truth above everything and to be fair to his opponents."

The Swiss Doctor further said that, in his opinion, many seemed to accept the principle of Mahatma Gandhi not as a creed but as a mere policy. "One cannot say that a fair trial has been given to the method of Truth and Ahimsa advocated by the Mahatma. If a very large number of those have apparently accepted it, they have done so superficially and not deeply," went on Dr. Ceresole. "This fair trial can be given only by the people who have the same spiritual convictions as the Mahatma. Personally, I am convinced that a small group of people holding these convictions could be—and perhaps would prove in the long run—irresistible."

FREEDOM THROUGH HARIJAN UPLIFT

Giving his impression about Mahatma Gandhi's Harijan tour, Dr. Pierre Ceresole said :

"I see very clearly the connection between Mahatma Gandhi's Harijan Campaign and his effort to get freedom for India. You cannot expect to be treated in the proper way by foreigners if you do not treat fairly your own brethren. Of course, the simple maxim of extending to all people scrupulously the regard and respect you would like to receive from others, if carried out in the political world, will suffice to solve almost every social and political difficulty. This is an instance in point when politics merges into true religion.

"I love the Mahatma as a religious teacher and hope that for the happiness not only of India but of the whole world his influence will ever be on the increase."

(The Hindu, June 1, 1934.)

9. The "Benefits" of British Rule :

(a) MR. J. MAXTON, M.P.

I am not primarily concerned with Indian Nationalist independence. India should of course, rule itself. In spite of all our irrigation and electricity schemes, our record does not justify the imposition of British Government in India. The results we have produced in the economic social and educational development of India are nothing about which any great nation should boast.

I am always twisted about Russia. The Russian Government has only been in power for fifteen years, but it has practically abolished illiteracy among large sections of the people. In India, after a century of British Government only a small proportion of the community are literate. Indians could not have done worse in social, economic and educational progress if they had been left entirely to their own devices. It may be true that there would have been internecine warfare and religious feuds; but we ourselves have not been out of warfare during the last hundred years, and we have never been quite free from religious feuds.

(New Leader—Swarajya, May 27, 1932)

(b) MR. BERNARD HOUGHTON, I. C. S., RETIRED

In education the Turkomans and Uzbeks have in twelve years far outdistanced the results of a century of Simla's efforts. Whilst for over four years Commissions and Conferences have laboured vainly to devise a constitution, these people of Central Asia framed one in as many months, a constitution which, judged by results-has worked admirably. By the use of tractors the latter have multiplied many times the harvest per acre, what time the Indian peasantry labour pitifully with their wooden ploughs. They are well-fed: Indian peasants are nearly starving. On the one side for the

future days stands unbounded hope ; on the other something akin to despair. Grasping 'the steel slaves of man'—the machines, Turkistan strides triumphantly forward. What of India ?

(Swarajya, Tuesday, April 12, 1932)

(c) MR. PIERRE LEGARDE:

TALK WITH A CONGRESSMAN

I should have liked to see Jawaharlal Nehru but he has been in prison for some time and is likely to remain there some time longer. Instead, I met another influential member of Congress. He said to me: "The truth is that we have been far too long the milch cow of England and in return she has given us only two things—poverty and illiteracy. You can see the poverty for yourself in the country villages. It is not a censure on the Government when in a land so rich and fertile the peasant is too poor ?

I had no answer to that I had indeed been moved by the poverty I had seen on my journey.

"As for illiteracy," he went on "perhaps you think I am juggling with figures, but I have taken them from this book" here he took down a fat bound volume from himself—"published by the Government. It states that of 350 million Indians only 20 millions have received any education. In the whole of India there are only 22 million persons who can read and

write a letter. If children under five are excluded the proportion is 8 per 1,000. Only 2 and half million Indians know English—160 men and 18 women to every 10,000 inhabitants.”

“But why blame this illiteracy on England? Does she not admit Indians to her universities? Is not your own son at Oxford for example?”

“Illiteracy is the natural consequence of poverty. A child of seven or eight has arms and legs that can be used for work. For him to go to school would mean one bowl of rice less for the family.”

(La Tribune des Nations, Paris.)

10. The Power of the Congress :

(a) SIR GEOFFREY CLARKE.

The Congress is most powerful, it is the only properly organised political body in the country. The real directing staff of the Congress is most difficult to locate. It continues to exercise its authority although all the visible leaders are incarcerated. It has its tentacles spread wide, even into the most remote villages.... In fact the very men now in jail for trying to overthrow the existing Government will be the future legislators and rulers of India. It is indeed a terribly difficult position and what the end will be, no one can foretell.

(Swarajya, Saturday, May 21, 1932.)

(b) M. PIERRE LEGARDE.

The following article from "La Tribune des Nations," Paris, a French newspaper by Pierre Legarde appears in the June number of the "World," a monthly periodical edited by Vernon Bartlett.

The scene is the railway station at Delhi. The platform is covered with red carpet and a beautiful white train is waiting polished and spotless as the interior of a model diary. Soldiers present arms for His Excellency the Field-Marshal Commander-in-Chief of the British troops is leaving the capital. He is accompanied by a few friends. The spectators number about a dozen.

The next morning the scene is the same station and the same platform—but no red carpet and no soldiers. There is however a dense and enthusiastic throng so dense that the ordinary police are insufficient to cope with it, and a hundred or so volunteers have been given an armlet and act as auxiliaries. It is surprising how the swarming crowd obeys their orders. An open space is roped off, the train arrives and from a million throats a cry arises that is at once a salute and an incantation. One passenger alights—a man, very dark-skinned. At once he is decorated with six or seven garlands and greeted with cheers. He thanks the crowd in a prayer like gesture his head bowed and his hands joined. And now as he goes to his carriage with its green flag he is carried rather than accompanied by

the crowd. The procession is formed and goes off through the streets of the town which are decorated with triumphal arches. Improvised music greets him as he passes, and rose petals strew his way. Babu Rajendra Prasad, President of the National Congress has arrived in Delhi.

I simply record these facts of which I was an eye-witness. I shall not attempt to draw any conclusions from them.

In England they smile at the National Congress "A handful of agitators," they call it: "a paltry minority." But may not a handful of resolute men direct a whole nation just as the brain directs the whole body?

CHAPTER III

THE INDIA BILL

1. Prof. Harold Laski's views :

*(As expressed at a meeting held in London in
February 1935—Ed.)*

Professor Laski said he would not go into the detail of the Bill but would submit its main principles to a few simple tests designed to answer three or four plain questions from the outlook of India and the Labour Party itself. To begin with it did not realise the policy of the Labour Party which was committed by the Hastings Conference to moving forward directly to Dominion Status. Everything in the Bill stood in the way of that realisation and of the development of that condition for India. The Bill actually made the revision of India's constitutional position more difficult than it ever was. It left no hope of creating the right kind of partnership for India in the British Empire. He confessed that he was no enthusiast for Federation under any conditions, but this Bill created a special problem by the very basis on which it proposed to establish Federation in India. It was going to hand over about two-thirds of the Federal power to the Princes who, to him, were an appalling body of men. Only the

rulers of Baroda, Travancore and Mysore approximated to representative men with advanced systems of government, and to put so much power into the hands of the others was to make the cause of democracy hopeless. The trouble was too, that as they would accede by treaty they must be upheld in their autocracy and unrepresentative authority, and there could consequently be no change at the instance of their own people as might be the case without this scheme which permanently entrenched them and must back them with the British Army.

A PRETENCE

A third glaring fault of the Bill, said Prof. Laski, was that it was a pretence at granting self-government. Actually the essence of State power remained indefinitely in British hands. Nothing was proposed as a time limit for the Indianisation of the army, and those who controlled the armed forces of a country—he instanced Herr Hitler in Germany—became its real masters. He could not see any approach to Dominion Status while this condition remained. If they meant really serious business about Indianisation, they could take steps even in this Bill to set a period to British control, but so long as committees predominantly composed of English officers were called on to decide or discuss the question there would never be anything but reports exaggerating the difficulties of the problem. In less than two years Trotsky could organise an army

capable of defending Soviet Russia and defeating all armed intervention. Surely India could do it in ten or fifteen years.

After criticising other main features and defects in the Bill Prof. Laski said the issue for the Labour Party was this: Could they amend the Bill in such a way as to bring it within the compass of reasonable standards of self-government and democracy? Unhesitatingly he said "No". The changes required, right down to the fundamentals, were so immense, that even if Labour could make them the Speaker would be bound to order the re-committal of the Bill on the grounds that it was an entirely new measure. It was hopeless to expect to amend an unamendable measure. Therefore they had to decide their course of action and policy. As a Socialist he believed with Burke that the consent of the people must be obtained and that there were ways of getting India as willing partner in the British Empire. They could get her consent but they could not coerce her. This Bill contained none of the elements of consent and much of coercion. It was to be imposed upon India, and it revealed to a degree how the technique of Imperialism was being practised against her. She was to be given a kind of government that Japan a century hence, might impose on Manchukuo. It was not a Bill for an honest advance in partnership but one clearly establishing the English economic control of India.

LABOUR'S ATTITUDE

The issue was whether Labour was to be a party to a measure, not based on consent, but of the character he had indicated, when everybody who was vocal in India had repudiated it? He was afraid of the situation developing in the Labour Party when it again became the Government and was asked by India to look into that country's political system, especially if any countenance had been given to this Bill. He foresaw the answer to be, "Our hands are full with our domestic problems. We cannot re-open the question when a Bill was passed only a year or so ago." If they countenanced this Bill they would have to uphold its operation when they became a Government. In that event they would have a number of Meeruts on their hands, and no Labour member would be able to stand up to any audience that tackled him about his responsibilities. The real answer to the problem was, therefore, to reject the Bill and decline to attempt to amend.

In the subsequent discussion Major Attlee, M.P., said that the Bill entirely put the power in the hands of vested interests and in that direction alone was against the recommendations of the Statutory Commission. He declared it was the intention of the Parliamentary Party to put down a reasoned amendment to the second reading motion for the rejection of the Bill.

Answering a question Prof. Laski said that the course he would recommend for a future Labour

Government, provided that the Party refused to have anything to do with the present Bill, was to send out a small representative committee charged to negotiate with India for framing her own constitution by means of a constituent assembly. He agreed with Major Graham Pole that India herself must frame her own constitution and it would then be for the Labour Government to give effect to it through a simple legislative enactment.

(The Hindu, March, 1935.)

2. British Press on the Bill :

The House of Commons opened its discussion of the India Bill in presence of the fact that Indian opinion with an unexpected approach to unanimity has already rejected it. It is not yet known how the vote in the All-India Legislative Assembly will go. Probably it will not be dramatic and it may even at this historic moment reflect the wretched communal jealousies that divide Indians. The facts however are these. The Congress Party stands for the unqualified rejection of the entire scheme. So does the extreme Hindu Left Wing which insists on emphasising its special dislike of the Communal Award. Together these two, with a few Sikhs and Moslems of "Congress" colour, constitute a majority of the elected Indian members. The Moslem view as voiced in the

resolution of Mr. Jinnah's party is rather subtler. It likes the Communal Award and no wonder. It wants some vital amendments (which it is not like to get) in the scheme of provincial autonomy. But it roundly condemns as "bad" the whole federal plan and wishes to begin with responsible central government in British India leaving the Princes outside. These cross-currents of opinion may save the Government from a spectacular defeat if it calls the official and nominated members to its aid. The fact remains that the whole mass of the elected members has recorded its hostility to the entire architectural plan of this Federation. Hindus and Moslems are agreed in rejecting its central strategical conception—the idea of calling in the Princes to neutralise Hindu democracy. They are also agreed in condemning the more reactionary features of the provincial constitutions. Where they differ it is according to plan. We will not say that the Communal Award was consciously designed to divide them; enough that it was well-calculated to have that effect.

The National Government is in a position to treat this record of Indian opinion as a negligible and meaningless fact and with its eyes open imposes a constitution upon India. It is possible and even probable that Indians can be found among the princes the plutocrats and the wealthier lawyers to work this constitution with the aid of the communal dissensions that it aggravates. But no good will come of it. India will not be reconciled nor can any Indian Government

emerge from it capable of grappling creatively with the desperate social and economic problems of a sub-continent that is little better than a vast rural slum. Sooner or later the banked-up fires of rebellion will break out again and then it may be even Tories will regret that they imposed a constitution that contains itself no provisions for amendment.

A CHEERFUL VIEW

Against this view among Liberals and even in the Labour Party, a more tolerant view of this constitution has come to prevail. This opinion is the natural consequence of the magnificent fuss that Mr. Churchill has made. "Surely", the average Liberal reflects "if this constitution is so distasteful to the Die-hards it must represent a really valuable instalment of Indian freedom. Perhaps the safeguards are excessive but after all though a Viceroy may have these very favourable "special powers" one need not suppose that he will often exercise them; they will gradually lapse. Responsible government however illusory it may be at the centre is genuine enough in the provinces. Finally though no Liberal can admire a propertied franchise or communal electorates or those arrangements which give double representation to landed property and industrial capital or the really shocking Upper Chambers of rich men armed with a veto that will hamper the legislative work of the five chief provinces even these blemishes may be removed by Parliament after the lapse of ten years. We regret that

the promise of Dominion Status is not embodied in the preamble but after all this Bill does take a long step in the evolution of the Indian Dominion that must eventually come."

It would be possible to answer this cheerful view of the Bill point by point. The mischief of excessive safeguards some of them designed to preserve the control of the City over Indian finance is not so much that they will often be used, but that they poison the atmosphere and create revolt by suggesting distrust. A provincial governor will rarely have to use his "special powers" because his Cabinet (over which he is to preside) will never be allowed to forget that he holds them always in reserve. We believe that this necessary "safe-guards" could have been secured in a much less objectionable way, if the Federal Court had been made the custodian of the positive rights of minorities, British residents and others as defined in the constitution. Again, the provinces are not, in fact, as autonomous as they look, since they must depend on the Centre for any considerable expansion of the revenues required for the social services. Again, though the ultra conservative provincial constitutions can be reviewed in ten years in the interval we are handing India over to be ruled by its propertied class, and nowhere on this earth are the usurers, small industrialists, and wholly parasitic landlords a less enlightened crew. Finally the failure to fix any date for the Indianisation

of the army renders the hope of an early or rapid evolution towards Dominion Status extremely precarious.

There is however a consideration that our view dwarfs every other and forbids us to regard this Bill as an instalment of reform that one grudgingly accepts for lack of something better. The calling in of the Princes to neutralise the Hindu masses (who in any event are barely represented) was a clever stroke of imperialist statecraft. The Princes, with very few exceptions are old-world autocrats, ultra-conservatives on every political, social and economic question. They are notoriously in leading-strings to Simla, and yet they have the merit of looking like Indians. With only two or three exceptions their States enjoy no civil or political rights, and their representatives in the Federal Legislature will be their personal nominees. Once there they will dominate it, for with less than a quarter of the total population they will have in the Lower House a third of the voting power, and in the Upper House forty per cent. The Federation starts, therefore, with an irreducible conservative block which needs only a slight reinforcement from the over-represented propertied element of British India to dominate the peninsula for ever. Elections may be held; the provinces may send up time after time big radical contingents, but with the help of a handful of minority groups of Princes can keep property in the saddle for any period of time that need concern us.

THE DRILLED BODYGUARD

The worst is still to come. The provisions for representation in the provinces, in our view very reactionary, can after 10 years be amended. But no one, not even the Parliament at Westminster, can touch these Princes or lessen their rights. They enter as sovereign parties to a Treaty. It would be ultra vires to impose on them any charter of civil or political rights, to lessen their excessive voting strength, or to require them to carry out any species of election. This they will do, if ever, at their own good pleasure.

Few have realised this aspect of the constitution. In our view it buys a spurious unity for the peninsula at the cost of permanent enslavement to the ugliest form of reaction. Some answers are possible. It may be said that the Princes are merely the drilled bodyguard of the Viceroy, which will vote as it is told. In that case the Federation is an even worse sham than it looks. Or else, it may be said that one day Princes will be driven to grant constitutions. It may be so. But some of them have fairly strong armies; all of them can count on the Paramount Power to suppress rebellion; few of them (perhaps four) face any free or organised opinion, or need fear a free press. To hand over India to these obscurantist depots, on the chance that revolutions will occur within any predictable time in hundreds of the most variously situated States, strikes us as a peculiarly irresponsible form of

optimism. One has no right to gamble in this way with the destiny of the Indian masses.

For two main reasons, then, we believe that the Opposition should fight this Bill in the spirit of men who mean, when they get the chance to deal with India on a very different footing. This settlement breaks the Prime Minister's pledge of free negotiation between equals and it hands India over, without the possibility of amendments to the Princes. For that reason it cannot be tolerated as a harmless, if inadequate instalment of reform. It threatens irreparable harm. Mr. Lansbury in his moving broadcast address appealed to the Government to withdraw the Bill and throw on Indians the responsibility for framing their own constitution. The new fact at Delhi makes such a course possible. When even the Mohammedans, the prop of British rule and the models of loyalty, declare the scheme of Federation 'bad' and unacceptable, is it prudent to proceed with it?

For our part we have always thought that the work should have been done by two stages. First let the autonomous provinces be constituted (but without Upper Houses and plural representation for property). Then without delay let the self-governing provinces combine to form a Federation. As for the Princes' States, let them come in on the same terms, that is to say when they accept a common charter of civil and political rights, and a common electoral system. This might have been done, and in fact nearly was done.

towards the close of the Round Table Conference. The Indians however would have none of it, because they distrusted this Government and feared endless delay or worse than delay in constituting the Federation.

There are ways of meeting that difficulty. It is possible to lay it down explicitly that within a year after the provinces are constituted on the new basis their popular Chambers shall elect delegations which shall form what would be in effect a Constituent Assembly. It will have at its disposal all the volumes of evidence and all the memoranda written for the Round Table. It should be free to decide on all matters of purely Indian concern. The few vital things that concern this country, mainly the arrangements for the transitional period must of course be subject to negotiations. The Dominion should be actually constituted, save that for some defined period of years, while the army is Indianised, certain of its rights must remain in abeyance. It should be understood that in the interim Indians are free in debate and free in association, as they are not to-day under a net-work of repressive legislation, and with the two leaders Jawaharlal Nehru and Ghaffar Khan, who rank only after Gandhi in popular affection, kept in what looks like permanent confinement. This would be our petition, even now and even to this Government. But if it hardens its heart, then we shall hope that a Labour Government may arrive in time to carry some such programme before this fatal Federation is actually in being.

"New Statesman and Nation."—(*The Indian Express*, March 5, 1935.)

3. Broken Pledges of Dominion Status :

Major Graham Pole in a communication to "Manchester Guardian" on the question of India stated:—

I have had letters from places as far apart as Cumberland and Wales thanking me for my letter that appeared in your columns a week ago detailing some of the pledges that had been given to India and on which India was entitled to and did rely.

I showed that the Viceroy speaking in India with the full authority of the British Cabinet, told the Legislature there that it was "implicit in the declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress as there contemplated is the attainment of Dominion Status."

I pointed out that the Chairman of the Conservative M. P.'s India Committee had said in the House of Commons that no pledge given by any Secretary of State or any Viceroy was binding on us. May I add one more to the statements that profoundly disturb Indian opinion—a statement made in the House of Lords on the very day on which my letter appeared in your columns.

Lord Rankeillour who was for many years Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker in the House of Commons and so may be assumed to speak with some authority said that we were bound by the preamble to the Government of India Act of 1919, but by nothing

else. And speaking of these pledges he added these words :

No statement by a Viceroy, no statement by any representative of the Sovereign, no statement by the Prime Minister, indeed no statement by the Sovereign himself can bind Parliament against its judgment. (Hanserd, House of Lords, Vol. 95, No. 8, Col. 331, 13th December 1934.)

OVERSTRAINING.

So that now we have a definite stand taken even by members of the House of Lords that a declaration made by the King-Emperor drawn up and approved of by a Coalition Cabinet is over-ruled by a previously passed Act of Parliament. This also applies to a declaration by His Majesty's representative in India made to the Indian People and approved not only by the British Cabinet but afterwards by Parliament itself. No doubt Lord Rankeillour is right in strict law but if neither he nor any other member raised the question in Parliament for the disapproval either of the pledge given by His Majesty or by His Viceroy is it not rather overstraining Indian loyalty to tell them years after the pledges have been given that their King-Emperor whose word they have been taught to believe was sacred had no right either by himself or through his representative to interpret the Act of Parliament to them as he had done ? How do noble Lords think that this estimate of the words of their King-Emperor will strike an Eastern people.

ALL THE MORE NECESSARY.

It is now all the more necessary for a definite declaration to be embodied in the preamble of India's New Constitution Act so that it may be regarded even by our die-hards as binding on future Parliaments that the ultimate issue of British policy in India is Dominion Status on a basis of equality with other self-governing Dominions in the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Perhaps it is worth while putting it on record that in the course of the discussion of the Government's White Paper in the House of Commons that eminent exponent of the law Sir John Simon used these words:

There is no question at all that this country is pledged as clearly as we can be pledged in honour and in policy and that pledge is undoubtedly to pursue in the Indian Empire a road which will lead to responsible Government.

"Responsible Government" is what India is now to have under the New Constitution Act. The Secretary of State for India put this clearly in his speech in the the House of Commons last week:

If there is to be an All-India Federation it must be a federation with a Government responsible to an Indian Federal Legislature. There can be no All-India Federation without the effective accession of a substantial number of Indian Princes. An All-India Federation without the accession of the Princes is a

contradiction in terms. You cannot persuade the Princes to accede to any federation which still remains under the control of White Hall Government. They have stated over and over again that the only kind of federation which they will join is a federation in which the Indian Executive is responsible to the Indian Legislature. It follows therefore that if there is to be an All-India Federation in any conditions that we can contemplate that federation must be a federation with responsible Government.

Mr. Polak's Plea :

Mr. H. S. L. Polak writing after the publication of the above wrote to "Manchester Guardian" as follows:—

May, I supplement Major Graham Pole's two admirable letters with two more quotations bearing on the question of Dominion Status—"a cant phrase of politics," as Lord Crewe contemptuously described it last week?

In the final stages of the debate on the Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee in the House of Commons on December 12 the Leader of the Opposition put to Mr. Baldwin a series of categorical questions on the subject with reference to the omission from the report of all reference to Dominion Status as the objective of British policy in India.

To these Mr. Baldwin, who was pressed for time replied tersely as follows: "In regard to the question the right hon. gentleman put to me, the Government

stand by all the pledges that have been given. They make no distinction between pledges."

In the House of Lords, on December 13, the Archbishop of Canterbury, to whom the cause of Indian constitutional reform owes so much said:—

I noticed that...Lord Snell...complained on behalf of his friends that no mention was proposed of what is called Dominion Status. I think that it is time that we got rid of such a misleading phrase. It has proved capable of infinite misunderstanding both in this country and in India. No one knows whether it means Constitution or position. If it is to mean Constitution, is it conceivable, considering the circumstances of India and the necessary relations with the Imperial Parliament which these circumstances involve that in any time which any of us can contemplate, India should have a Constitution identical with those which have been achieved in countries so entirely different as South Africa, Australia or Canada? Therefore it is no use thinking there can never be a Constitution in India identical with the Constitution of those Dominions; but surely an India self-governed, especially a great All-India Federation, will always have increasingly within the British Empire a place of honour quite as distinct and recognised as that of any of the Dominions.

MAY NOT CARRY US VERY FAR.

It is to be feared that his Grace's remarks on this question will fail to clear up what he describes as the "misunderstanding" in India, in the light of the history of this controversy.

As to the pledge of "responsible government," it may not carry us very far on the question of status, in spite of Sir John Simon and Sir Samuel Hoare. It was because a narrow interpretation was sought to be put upon the phrase in the preamble to the 1919 Act by an eminent spokesman of the Government of India that a wide-spread agitation arose there for an authoritative interpretation by the British Government itself. This, it will be recalled, resulted in the declaration made on behalf of the Cabinet in November 1929 by the then Viceroy.

After all, Rhodesia enjoys "responsible government," and Malta did so, too, as regards her internal affairs, until the Constitution was suspended, some time ago, the pretext of an emergency the existence of which has been challenged by the leaders of all the political parties in the colony. Can any one say that it will be possible for the Cabinet to issue an order in Council suspending the Constitution of a self-governing British Dominion or that "responsible government" such as is contemplated by Sir John Simon and Sir Samuel Hoare is equivalent to the status of "equality with the self-governing Dominions in the British Commonwealth of Nations"?

(*The Indian Express*, January 9, 1935.)

CHAPTER IV

REPRESSION IN INDIA

1. Repression never succeeds :

Despite attempts at censorship, the news from India is grave enough to belie official complacency and official optimism.

The severe repressive measures were defended on their adoption by the assurance that they were intended to be used against terrorism by murder.

They are, in fact, being employed against that Congress movement which has so far pinned its faith, to the methods of "nonviolence" advocated by Mr. Gandhi.

The vast majority of the political prisoners who are crowded into Indian jails are not terrorists but followers and disciples of the man, who few weeks ago, was being addressed by the Prime Minister as "My dear Mahatma."

The outrage gave the excuse. The reality of the Government of India's action is an attempt to destroy the Congress organisation and the Congress policy by intimidation.

The "old way" which Mr. MacDonald has so eloquently condemned, which the Viceroy is understood

emphatically to disapprove, is still being trodden by that bureaucracy which, rather than Premiers and Viceroy is the real power in India.

Now the trouble about this "old way" of repression is not merely that it never succeeds. It also makes success by other means more difficult.

Repression turns discontent into bitter hatred, and leaves behind it a legacy of rankling memories that need generations for their effacement.

If that Indian self-government to which this country is pledged, is to become a fact, and a successful fact two conditions are essential.

The one is speed, the other the maintenance of good feeling during the preliminary period.

Neither condition is being fulfilled. In spite of Lord Willingdon's desires and efforts the constructive work goes far too slowly.

And while it saunters along, the policy of repression re-kindles illfeeling, and makes the solution of difficult problems vastly more difficult.

Another few months of the present methods and the opportunity of last year will have been destroyed beyond hope of recall.

(The Daily Herald.—Swarajya, Monday, May 16, 1932.)

2. Wholesale imprisonment :

Whatever may be our individual opinions with regard to the vindication of Ordinances, probably every one, and especially those in positions of administrative responsibility, experience a sense of deep regret that these happenings must be in our age. In any case it is a bad thing for any reasoning man to face the necessity, or be called upon to undertake the responsibility of removing tens of thousands of India's subjects from civic freedom, and to continue this partly at the expense of releasing thousands of judged and condemned criminals in order to accommodate political detainees in prison. Yet such is the extremity to which we are reduced.

(The Times of India.—Swarajya, Monday, May 9, 1932.)

3. Police Terrorism in Schools :

Mr. Duncan Greenlees who was convicted in July 1932 in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement made the following statement in Court:—

Because I wear khaddar and have done so for many years, because I live in the city almost as an Indian and because I have many good friends among Congressmen, the Police of this city have long suspected me of doing political work in secret. Their suspicion was fully justified. I have been doing Congress work for several months past. Although they

have now searched my house four times they never found anything objectionable. For a long time the Allahabad Police have been seeking an excuse to arrest me and luckily for them the opportunity came when my school closed for the vacation, and so no stir could take place among the students.

I should have said nothing about the actual pamphlets which I am here accused of having written for publication but that I am compelled to repudiate most strongly the insinuation that I have incited to or encouraged violence or murder as implied in the section under which I am charged viz., Section 18 of Act XXIII of 1931. So little faith have I in violence that I have never, in the course of the six years I have been in school, caned or even slapped a boy and the hundreds of guardians here and elsewhere who know me and who know my attitude to life will join in that repudiation. Though I have personally witnessed most of the Congress demonstrations here this year I have seen no violence on the part of the people nor would the pamphlets here produced have led to any. Since I was a boy I have been a pantheist believing in the oneness of all life and to such a man war and violence appear as much a futile foolishness as a sin. Not by hatred can evil be overcome.

WHY HE JOINED CONGRESS

Guilty or not guilty of the specific offence with which I have been charged, I certainly am guilty of

having done what little work I could to help the Congress in the present struggle. And for that reason, I welcome my arrest and imminent conviction trusting that even this may contribute a little to the suffering, needed before India can be free.

As a foreigner it is right that I should try to explain why I have intervened in this fight at all. I must crave the patient indulgence of this court when I try to make my position clear.

I am a teacher by vocation and I find the greatest happiness when I am with my boys sharing their lives and hopes and trying to enter into spiritual oneness with them. To me there is no more sacred relationship than this. Imagine then the horror and disgust with which I received the then Collector's order in February last to prostitute this sacred trust by spying on my boys for the Police and reporting any whom I noticed as attending Congress meetings. Where any of my boys are likely to be in physical danger there it is my proud duty to go to watch and try to guard them but I naturally refused to obey so wrongful an order as this. My expectations of arrest were then falsified but no doubt my attitude was remembered though such an order was wisely never repeated. I am ashamed to say that all the other headmasters obeyed it without a word of protest. It is intolerable that in India a Police officer should have the power of trampling in such a way upon the holy relationship between a teacher and his pupils. This sort of an order forces a teacher to really take part in politics.

FOUL ATMOSPHERE

The whole atmosphere of the recognised schools have now become foul beyond belief. Even ordinary songs that smack of patriotism are now forbidden lest some petty Government officials should be displeased, and the worst kind of toadyism and insincerity are being taught instead.

The educational code as shown in the recent history of my own school where we foolishly trusted the Government's word can no longer be effective in those clauses which protect the teachers from injustice. It has power only to oppress those who love their country and try to serve her, and to cramp the free development of the human soul in its childhood. Secret orders are sent to headmasters to refuse admission to any teacher or student who has played his part in helping his country, while in England such a teacher would have had a right to figure on the roll of honour in any school assembly hall.

SYMBOL OF NATIONAL STRUGGLE

The curricula are so devised as to leave no time for real education and to produce only literary cowards and hypocrites who feign loyalty to a government which they do not feel and in order to secure a few wretched clerkships.

This most unnatural atmosphere must be changed and the teacher's first duty is to change it. The price

of such an endeavour is I suppose the prison. It is a price that has to be paid all the world over and one must pay it gladly.

I have never joined any political party in India, nor I have even troubled myself to exercise my vote in England. But Congress is not a party; it is the symbol of a nation struggling into wakefulness and self-expression, and surely it is for all those who live in this country to help in that struggle.

If you stay in the house of a friend and a thief enters that house with whom will you sympathise? If a robber enters, beats and plunders your host, will you preserve a dignified neutrality?

I am a guest of India. Has a guest no duties to his host? No guest in England would ever dream of bringing his own bedding, food, soap etc., when he goes to a friend's house. It is natural for me who believes in these things that I should buy and wear things made and manufactured in India and eschew foreign goods. There is I feel no hatred involved in such a living.

NO CONSTITUTIONAL MEANS

I am arrested as a breaker of law. I believe in constitutional agitation and a true constitution would require that the laws passed in India would need to be assented by the Indian Legislative assembly at Delhi.

The ordinances have never been passed by that legislature. They have the brute force of law that can never have its moral right nor have the binding power on those who believe in and obey in the natural laws.

In India where the constitution itself is faulty there are no constitutional means of amending it as is usual in other free countries. Men are compelled some times to adopt other means in order to change the constitution. These methods may be technically illegal, but they cannot be wrong. English history is full of such attempts and every great reform being secured by the use of such methods. Imperialism and military rule have no future; they belong to a Victorian past and to the middle ages.

I claim India as my motherland. I claim the right to work and suffer for her as I would for my mother. I am no more foreigner here than are most of the Police and the I. C. S. who believe in their own way that they are serving India. I have the same right as they to live and labour here as they and it is for the Indian public to say if we labour well or ill and which of the methods we employed was the wiser.

If any word I have ever written or uttered has sinned against the perfect ideal of absolute harmlessness, most sincerely offer my apology to the people of India who are my real judges and to whom I appeal for my final verdict.

(Swarajya, Wednesday, July 20, 1932.)

4. Whipping and long drawn out trials:

MR. J. MAXTON, M.P.

I had a letter from a friend last week telling me of a boy, fifteen years of age who had been whipped because he had taken part in picketting in connection with the Non-co-operation Movement. Is it necessary for the maintenance of the dignity of the British Raj publicly to whip the bare bodies of boys of fifteen? Before I came to the House of Commons I was a teacher, and I know that that sort of thing is not necessary or desirable. I would suggest that, even if we accept the general policy of the mailed fist as natural for this Government, it is not necessary to carry it to the extent of barbarism. If these things are necessary, it is only another argument against our being there at all.

THE MEERUT TRIAL

But my main interest is with the small minority in India engaged in the working class struggle against economic dependence, that section in India who do not believe that Indian self-government will abolish poverty among the Indian people, and who are prepared to admit that wealthy Indians and potentates might be more tyrannical than the British Government, I am concerned with the section of the Indian people who recognise that they have to develop a working-class movement prepared to fight against economic tyranny,

whether imposed by British rule and British Capitalism or by Indian rule and Indian Capitalism.

I want to raise my voice in strongest protest against the horrible trial of the prisoners at Meerut; I have sat here in three Parliaments. The arrests began, in the first, the trial continued during the whole of the last Parliament, and is going on now. These prisoners, some of them Englishmen, have been for three years subjected to the gruelling experiences of the law courts, always with the possibility of a heavy sentence, and there has never been one word of resentment on behalf of this House. I ask whether this trial will pass the test of any ordinary standard of fair play and decency set up in our own country.

The length of the trial is excused on the ground that the prisoners are prolonging their defence. The prosecution took up two years and six months, and then, when in the last six months the prisoners reply to this extended prosecution, the Minister replies: "The fault is yours. Close your case and the trial will be finished". The previous excuse was the slow procedure of Indian Courts. Imagine that as an excuse from a Government which is prepared to impose ordinances to abolish the judicial procedure of whole provinces. When the Government wants to speed up things, the procedure of the ordinary law does not stand in its way.

INDIA WILL LEARN

But this case is a good lesson to the people of India. Be an ordinary political offender, and you will be brought speedily to trial. But if you are struggling for a fundamental social change, then in addition to the ordinary penalties you will be subjected to long term torture. The whole of India can watch it and learn that, whatever else you do in India, you must not struggle for economic and social liberty.

I understand from the leader of the Labour Party that, owing to the fact that only a half day is now available for discussing Indian affairs, he does not propose to challenge a vote, and that another opportunity will be available. In those circumstances I do not propose to divide the House to-day, because I do not want it to be sent out to India that here are only four or five people prepared to protest. I want, however, to make it plain that in not voting to-day we are not in any way assenting to any of the political barbarities imposed by the Government and to the treatment of the Meerut prisoners; and that we are not accepting the Government's policy as an adequate way of dealing with the situation.

(Speech made in Parliament.)

(*"New Leader"*—*Swarajya*, Friday, May 27, 1932.)

5. Lathi Charge :

The following is the full text of a letter published by the "Statesman":—

Sir.—Herewith I am sending you a copy of a letter sent to-day to H.E. Sir John Anderson, Governor, of Bengal. In case it should be of any interest to you please feel free to use it in any way you wish.—

Yours, etc.,

FRANK C. BANCROFT, JR.

Y. M. C. A.,

73, Paddapuker Road,
Calcutta, June 1.

H. E. SIR JOHN ANDERSON,
Governor of Bengal.

SIR;

I am taking the liberty of addressing to you a letter concerning certain personal knowledge in regard to the unfortunate incidents coincident upon the attempted meeting of the Forty-seventh Session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta two months ago. I do so in a strictly private capacity, in as much as for more than a year I have been connected with no mission or business concern. I am an American citizen.

My primary reason for addressing you is that you are principally concerned in the preservation of law and order in Bengal and also in any charges which may be made by or against that Province. My interest

in the matter arises out of the fact that it threatens to cast umbrage over the veracity of a great national and international figure, namely, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

I am in possession of personal knowledge relating only to one of the incidents referred to in the communications which have gone back and forth between Malaviyaji and Government, namely the dispersion of the meeting held in the Esplanade Tram Shed on April 1, to which I happened to be an eye-witness.

I arrived in the middle of the proceedings. The Congressmen and Congresswomen were at the moment confined to the shed, which was surrounded by police, some mounted and some armed with lathis. I took my place in the circumference of a large crowd which had encircled the open space kept clear by the Police. Several times we were ordered to leave and further persuaded to do so by horses rapidly advancing into our midst. We felt, however, that it was our right to return and peaceably watch peaceable proceedings, which we did several times.

In the midst of this process a police lorry arrived. About nine-tenths of those under the shed were sent away, but only after very severe lathi-beating; I personally saw several women struck quite fiercely over the shoulders, necks and backs. After this a number were rushed into the lorry, and one man who stumbled on the steps was very brutally beaten before he could rise.

Unfortunately, we could see no more, because at this juncture we were all driven down Dharrumtolla by an indiscriminate lathi-charge, none of the blows of which happened to fall upon myself.

As this matter has assumed a considerable public interest, I venture to send copies of this letter to the Calcutta papers. I am sure you are as interested as anyone that the full, frank, and fair facts of the matter should be known.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed)

FRANK C. BANCROFT, JR.

(Swarajya, June 5, 1933.)

6. Official Ignorance :

(Prof. Harold Laski's spirited criticism of official replies.)

When Parliament rose for the Easter Vacation on March 24th Sir Samuel Hoare made a brief statement on the Indian position. The gist of his pronouncement was three-fold: (1) the situation was no worse than it was last December, before the break with Congress: (2) though the Ordinances were severe, they were not more severe than the position warranted: (3) most of the accusations against the police for the use of violence were without warrant, and, notably, that of Mr. Peter Freeman, an ex-Labour M.P. was denied by the Government of Madras.

It is difficult to follow the logic which underlies Sir Samuel Hcare's mentality. On his first statement certain simple facts may be borne in mind; (1) Some forty thousand persons have been arrested since January 1st, 1932. (2) Most of the leaders of the National Congress, with which the Government has now definitely broken are in jail. (3) Scores of associations connected with the Congress have been proclaimed as illegal. (4) The boycott continues in all its intensity in Bombay. (5) There are daily accounts of serious clashes with the police in which shooting and beatings are common features. (6) Women have begun to take a part in the terrorist campaign. (7) The disturbances in the North-West Frontier Province have reached such proportions and have been so severely repressed, that Mahomedan opinion is gravely disturbed. (8) The Press censorship increases in intensity; it is not now safe even to print accounts of the proceedings in the Legislative Assembly. Nothing in all this was true during the meetings of the Second Round Table Conference. If Sir Samuel Hcare does not regard it as a worsening of the position could he inform Parliament and through it the British people what he would regard as deterioration.

IRISH LESSON

If the Ordinances are not more severe than the position warrants is it not clear that it must be worse than it was during the Second Round Table Conference when the Ordinances were not required? Having

refused to discuss the Indian constitution with Mr. Gandhi, the Pandit Nehru, Dr. Ansari and their colleagues, will Sir Samuel Hoare inform us upon whom he relies for its operation, when drafted? Able as are Sir Tej Sapru and his friends the Indian Liberals, he cannot be ignorant of the fact that they have little support among the masses of India. Whatever be the errors of judgment or strategy of which the Congress is guilty, no other body has the same right to speak for Indian opinion. To refuse to deal with it is like ignoring the Miners' Federation in a dispute in the coal industry and insisting upon dealing only with a union like Spencer Union of Nottingham. Sir Samuel Hoare must know very well that no settlement can be successful which lacks the support of at least the outstanding Indian leaders now in prison. Every day of their detentions there only increases the general exacerbation of temper and makes, thereby, a general solution more difficult of attainment. Historic experience, moreover, makes it *a priori* obvious that Ordinances of the character imposed by the Government cannot, by their very nature, be justly applied. They are bound to alienate opinion because their appeal is to force and fear. A policy built upon such motivation may succeed over a short period. In the long run it is not only bound to fail; it makes it after-math worse than the original difficulties it was intended to counter. A very elementary acquaintance with the history of Ireland would teach Sir Samuel Hoare (if he is teachable) the grave

error of alienating by the use of force, those with whom he will sooner or later have to negotiate.

WILL HE FACE IT?

Sir Samuel Hoare dismisses lightly the accusations of violence made against the police. In England, without the evidence at our disposal, we cannot, of course, prove that he is wrong. But let us remember that in these circumstances Governments always deny such accusations as a matter of form. In a choice between the evidence of men like Mr. Freeman, the Pandit Malaviya, the missionary Dr. Paton to mention only three persons, I am not prepared in the absence of an independent tribunal to accept the word of the Government that its officials are innocent of the offences with which they are charged. Anyone who knows the history of Poland in the Ukraine, of the clash between white and red in Russia, of the Black and Tans in Ireland, of the administration of the Punjab in 1919 under Martial Law, knows that a Government always denies its excesses, and an impartial inquiry (always made too late to do justice to the dead or the injured) always subsequently proves that they have substantial truth in them. I challenge Sir Samuel to submit the evidence now in existence to the examination of a body presided over by a British judge and composed of men like Mr. Wedgwood Benn, Mr. Lowes Dickinson Mr. R.H. Wawney and Mr. R. J. Boothby, M.P. He must have a very poor estimate of British interest in India if he

assumes that the mere "ipse dixit" of the India Office now carries any conviction in matters of this kind.

When the late Labour Government was in office, it looked as though the combined wisdom of Lord Irwin, Mr. Benn and Lord Sankey might effect a real partnership between Great Britain and India upon the basis of responsible self-government; Lord Sankey, indeed insisted that it was mainly to secure this that he continued in office under the National Government.

DIVIDE AND RULE

It is plain to every observer that the whole spirit of the administration has changed. Repression has succeeded to conciliation as the basis of policy. Men in the sincerity of whose faith in India's ideals it is impossible to believe are now in control. They are playing the old game of seeking to divide and govern or crush by force the yearnings of a people for freedom. They are bound to fail. They tried that policy in Ireland; they tried it in America and Russia tried it in Poland. Austria tried it in Italy. The end of such policy has always been disastrous to the people which attempts it. I believe it is still not too late to make genuine agreement with the leaders of Indian opinion if we remember the great axiom of Burke that magnanimity in politics is not seldom the greatest virtue. Sir Samuel Hoare has forgotten that maxim; and he is committing the British people to

methods and policies which deny the whole tradition for which they are anxious to stand.

(Indian Review—Swarajya, Tuesday, April 26, 1932).

7. Visible Organization Driven Underground:

H. N. BRAILSFORD.

The Labour Party is to be congratulated on the bold challenge which it delivered in Monday's debate to the Government's conduct in India. It may be unable to influence the course of events, but at least it has cleared us all of any burden of complicity. The tragedy of China may for the moment overshadow the slow-moving Indian Struggle but in both of them history is shaping a new Asia under our eyes and hardening a nation which will never again relapse into its old fatalistic passivity.

AN EXERCISE IN OPTIMISM

Sir Samuel Hoare's account of the National Government's doings in India was from first to last an exercise in optimism which leaves the reader gasping and questioning. One is doubtful first of all, of his readings of the facts. He would have us believe that repression is succeeding. He set out with the full concurrence of Lord Willingdon and his officials to crush the National Congress movement. It is evident in

retrospect, that they took this decision while the Round Table Conference was still sitting. They managed their campaign so clumsily that they appeared to be the aggressors. Mr. Gandhi landed in India as he left London, disposed to co-operate with the Government but as a preliminary he sought an interview with the Viceroy to discuss with him the working of the Bengal Ordinance. That consultation should have been the natural sequel to his talks with Sir Samuel Hoare. The Viceroy refused, however, to meet him on his ground and so destroyed the possibility of collaboration.

It is impossible to believe that any desire for it existed on the official side. The Government as Sir Samuel Hoare's speech reveals, was jealous of the growing power of the Congress, which was apt to pose as he told us as a 'parallel Government.' It resolved therefore to destroy it, and it has gone to work with a thoroughness which satisfies its supporters.

QUESTION OF FACTS

Two questions confront us. Is the will of that great part of the Indian people which follows the Congress in fact being broken? If it is, what do we gain thereby? For, the Government professes a "dual Policy." It is committed to a scheme which ultimately means Self-Government. It is a scheme which moderate Indians view without enthusiasm and the Congress with contempt. Assuming that the Congress can be and is being crushed (whatever that term may mean), are the

prospects of a smooth working of the new constitution improved ?

The question of fact is difficult to judge. It is part of the repression that any free circulation of news and views is forbidden. Sir Samuel Hoare told the House that there is no censorship by which presumably he meant that Indian editors are not required to submit their proofs to a police officer. They would feel rather more secure if they did. In fact they are subject to fines, imprisonments and suppression, if they print either news or comments which displease the official mind. Several newspapers have been suppressed ; some editors are actually in prison ; the rest go in daily fear.

LACK OF INFORMATION

Nor is His Majesty's opposition permitted any independent source of information. The labour Party in view of this debate, had sought from Pandit Malaviya, one of the most respected of the Indian Leaders, whom no one could call an extremist, an account of the present situation as he sees it. He cabled a message of 1,100 words which was withheld. The result of such tactics may be to silence informed criticism but equally it destroys the value of such news as we are allowed to receive. It is a selection designed to fortify the thesis of the Government that all is going well under a model police force.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

With my own personal experience of last year's repression, in my memory, I for one, am completely sceptical. I do not believe that the Congress has been crushed, though its visible organisation has doubtless been driven underground. Even the censored news bears witness to numerous demonstrations. The boycott of British goods continues, in spite of the continual arrests of pickets. Over 20,000 men, women (according to the semi-official Reuter's Agency) had been imprisoned up to the end of January. If the numbers of those willing to risk arrest had fallen off during the following month, I think Sir Samuel Hoare would have been prompt to publish the statistics; instead, he told us that his officials are too busy to count their prisoners.

The state of the prisons under such conditions may be imagined. Most of the prisoners are placed in class "C". As I saw their plight last year in Dum Dum gaol near Calcutta, they were grossly over-crowded; their food was insufficient and of poor quality, they were allowed neither soap nor mosquito nets, malaria was, in consequence so prevalent that in the packed hospital of the prison the beds were crammed together with a bare six inches of space between them. None-the-less Indians were ready, up to a total of 60,000 to face even these conditions last year. Do they, knowing the risks show less courage to-day? On the contrary, so far as one can gather from the meagre news, the

pace of arrests is quicker and the Indian Police is even readier to use lathi and rifle.

THE RENT STRIKE

One fact, indeed, Sir Samuel Hoare gave us by way of proving the success of repression. After admitting what I predicated a year ago that the No-Rent strike in the United Provinces had the makings of an agrarian revolution, he claimed that it is now virtually over. It may be so, one has no means of checking official optimism; under a censorship one can neither believe nor deny. But if it be so, it was not prison or the rifle or the Lathi which brought this about. I have a cutting from a local newspaper that reached me in spite of Police vigilance, which seems to give the true reason. In the Cawnpore district the Collector it states officially announced reduction both of rents and irrigation charges by 50 per cent.

ORDINANCES

The Government in fact, has granted what the Congress in vain sought it to grant. It drafted its terrific Ordinance; it shot down starving peasants; it flung the leaders into prison and within six weeks it had to yield exactly what they demanded and it had refused. That is not a success for the 'lathi' and it promises, in spite of official optimism, an empty treasury; for to halve the rent is to halve the land-revenue also.

Let us suppose however, that Government can put an end more or less, to open demonstrations by Congress, partly by imprisoning its leaders by the thousands, partly by beating its followers, and partly by conceding its demands. There follows a period of lassitude and cowardice, the people has had enough for the time being, of 'lathi' blows, and malarious prisons. What then? Are you a step nearer to conciliation? Is India more in love with your promised constitution?

IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION

Some Committees, it is true, are still working at this constitution. One reports the final refusal of the Moslems to face any compromise whatever with the Hindus—the natural result of the encouragement which the Tories and their Press have given them. Another registers the refusal of the Princes to permit the Constitution of any charter of civil rights. A third is collecting evidence bearing on the franchise. So the detail is elaborated, largely with negotiations, while the central issue is ignored.

Is there then, any reason to suppose that the main body of Indian opinion is readier that it was to accept a constitution which withholds at the centre control either of the army or of finance? It is useless for Sir Samuel Hoare to talk of Congress as a mere 'fraction' of the Indian population. It is not the whole. It is not, I think, the 60 per cent which Mr. Gandhi

claims. But assuredly it is something above a half, if one takes the whole of British India.

It may be possible so to terrorise it that the stream of active defiant rebels will dwindle—though of that one sees no proof. But will its adherents, because they dread our prisons and our ‘lathis’ like our constitution the better? If ever it is imposed they will boycott the elections. If they should consent to enter its assemblies and councils it will be a wrecking Opposition. And then to whom will the Government look? The Moderates are able men, but they are negligible in numbers, nor will they consent themselves to carry on the coercion of to-day. This “Dual policy” is an impossibility. Into sullen acquiescence a nation may possibly be coerced for a time, but not into enthusiasm for an inadequate constitution.

(Swarajya, Tuesday, April 5, 1932.)

8. The Ordinances:

(a) SCOPE OF THE ORDINANCES

MR. A. FENNER BROCKWAY EX. M. P.

One of the strongest arguments against the rule of India by Britain is that, in the very nature of things the British people are ignorant of what that rule consists in. The population of Britain has enough problems of its own. The working class are wondering how they

are going to live on reduced wages and unemployment benefits. The middle class are wondering how they are going to pay their income-tax. It is not to be expected that they should show much concern about the problems of a people, 7,000 miles distant.

The average British citizen has little or no sense of responsibility towards India.

ONLY TWO INTERESTED

The traditional British view has been to leave such matters to the "man on the spot." Occasionally the newspapers report something startling. Then one man in the railway carriage will remark to his neighbour, "I see that silly old man, Gandhi, is making trouble again," and conversations will turn to his loin cloth. There are only two sections of the British people who have any real interest in India—the keen Socialists and the keen imperialists, both of whom are of course, except at election times, insignificant minorities. Perhaps there is a third section—the Lancashire population engaged in the cotton industry.

They are concerned about their loss of trade. During the past few weeks the newspapers have given exceptional space to India, though still much less than the American newspapers give. But British public opinion is still quite hazy as to what is occurring.

MEAGRE NEWS

The average man knows that some Indians have been in London at some kind of Conference and that as soon as Gandhi went back to India trouble began again. He knows that there is some difficulty about what kind of Government India should have, but little more. He reads of ordinances being promulgated, but if one asked him what an ordinance is he would not know, and as to what promulgation is—!

But there is some excuse for the average man. There are not three newspaper editors in London what at this moment know the terms of the new Indian Ordinances.

The latest Bengal Ordinance was published in Calcutta last October. Three weeks ago there was not a copy in England outside the walls of the India Office! My friend Reginald Reynolds, the young Quaker who delivered Gandhi's final message to Lord Irwin, before the civil disobedience campaign of 1930, scoured London for a copy in vain. Finally, he succeeded in securing a loan of a copy from the Secretary of State.

Yet this ordinance, issued in the name of the British people, embodies principles against which all the honoured pioneers of British democracy have fought.

THE TERROR ORDINANCE

The Bengal ordinance is political terrorism beyond anything which the Fascists are imposing in

Italy or the Bolshevists in Russia. Here are a few of the provisions of the first chapter of the ordinance.

1. The Government assumes power to commandeer any property, movable or immovable, for its use—land houses, furniture, vehicles, etc.

2. The District Official may award such compensation as he thinks reasonable. There is no obligation to award any compensation.

3. Various specified classes in the community, including teachers may be conscripted to assist the Government in the maintenance of "law and order" or in the protection of government property.

4. Collective fines may be imposed on the inhabitants of areas concerned in the commission of a scheduled list of offences.

5. No civil or criminal proceedings are allowed against any action under the ordinance or "in good faith intended to be done" under the ordinance.

The second chapter of the ordinance sets up tribunals for the trial of political offences. These are the main characteristics of the tribunals.

1. The special tribunals are to consist of three persons.

2. A majority verdict is to prevail.

3. The tribunals may meet in camera.

4. Sentences of transportation for life and of death may be given.

5. Accused persons may be tried in their absence.
6. No appeal is allowed.

The avowed object of this ordinance was to suppress a 'terrorist' movement in Bengal. It was promulgated before the Round Table Conference in London had dispersed.

I was with Mr. Gandhi when he received news of the ordinance, and he feared immediately that it meant the end of the truce between the British Government and the National Congress.

EFFECT ON GANDHIJI'S MIND

Then came news of the repressive ordinances to suppress the discontentment in the North-West Frontier Province and the rent strike in the United Provinces. They had a most depressing effect upon Mr. Gandhi. Despite the disappointments of the Round Table Conference, he still had hope.

He trusted the honesty of purpose of Sir Samuel Hoare the Conservative Secretary of state, though he recognized the distance which separated their views. While there was sincerity on each side he felt that the door to co-operation was still open.

The Bengal ordinance has been extended to Bombay, and the North-West Frontier Province ordinances have been extended to a large part of India. Before describing them, reference should be made to the Rent Strike Ordinance, which at the moment of writing

is limited to the United Provinces, though its extension to Gujerat in the Bombay Province, is anticipated.

THE NO-TAX MOVEMENT

The rent strike has both a political and an economic motive. It has a political motive because the British Government in India is, in the last resort, the possessor of all land.

In certain parts of India the peasants pay direct to the Revenue Collectors; in other parts they pay to the "zamindars" (large landlords), who transfer approximately 50 p. c. of their takings to the Government. The latter system is particularly hard on the peasants, because the zamindars have the power to increase their land charges, irrespective of what they pass on to the authorities. But during the last year, owing to the fall in the prices of grain, the peasants have found the demands of both the zamindars and the revenue collectors intolerable, and an economic motive for refusal of land payments has been added to the political.

The rent strike spread like a prairie fire over the United Provinces. The Government agreed to reduce rents to the level of 1901, when prices were similar to those of this year, but the rent strike continued.

THE SEQUEL

A special ordinance was therefore issued on December 14, enabling the authorities to arrest any one withholding rent or inciting others to withhold rent, and to sentence them to two years of rigorous imprisonment.

It was under this ordinance that Jawaharlal Nehru, the most influential of the younger leaders of the Congress cause, was arrested for attempting to leave Ahmedabad, when this had been prohibited. He had been a prominent advocate of the rent strike. He was sentenced to two years rigorous imprisonment and fined 500 rupees. This ordinance will undoubtedly be used extensively by the Government if the refusal of land payments spreads to other parts of India.

AND THE FRONTIER

The North-west Frontier ordinances were promulgated on December 14, and were known as the Unlawful Instigation Ordinance and the Unlawful Associations Ordinances.

They were originally issued to meet the activities of the "Red Shirts," a formidable, though avowedly non-violent, organisation, loosely associated with the Indian National Congress and whole-heartedly supporting its aims, but largely uninfluenced by its discipline, owing to distance and racial and religious independence.

To the Red Shirts the spirit of the truce meant little: they carried on their agitation for independence and strengthened their organisation in readiness for the renewed struggle. Accordingly the British authorities assumed power to suppress their organization, to arrest their leaders, and to arrest any one instigating resistance to British rule.

This Unlawful Instigation Ordinance has since been extended to Madras, Bombay, the Punjab, and Bihar and Orissa; the Unlawful Associations Ordinances, to Madras, Bengal, Bombay, the United Provinces, and Bihar and Orissa.

LAST YEAR

It is under the latter ordinance that the Congress has been declared an illegal organization. During the civil disobedience campaign of 1930 Congress was an illegal organization in some parts of India but legal in others.

The head office of the Congress at Allahabad remained open during the whole of the campaign; for instance, the Working Committee met there unmolested.

In Bombay, however, where the Congress was outlawed, the premises were seized and the members of the Congress Committee were arrested almost as soon as they were appointed. It is characteristic of the greater thoroughness with which the Government is now attempting to suppress the Congress movement that it has applied this ordinance to practically every part of British India. The members of the All India Working Committee, as well as of the district and local committees, are being arrested 'en bloc.'

BOYCOTT

A third Ordinance—the Prevention of Molestation and Boycotting Ordinance—applies to the whole of

British India. The ordinance which was in operation in Bombay during the 1930 campaign has been extended to include peaceful picketing as well as actual molestation. Congress supporters have even been arrested for sitting outside shops selling British goods, though they have remained silent and motionless. Their presence is regarded as an offence.

The most inclusive of the Ordinances is the Emergency Powers Ordinance of January 3. It is being applied steadily to all parts of India.

‘WAR’ MEASURES

It gives the British authorities virtual powers to conscript both property and persons. It provides for the commandeering of transport, the restriction of communications and movements, it gives rights of search, the right to arrest suspected persons and to restrict them to certain areas; it enables the authorities to take possession of buildings for Government service or for the accommodation of troops or police; it applies compulsion to certain persons, such as the Headman of villages, to maintain “law and order”; it authorizes the collection of ‘collective fines’; and it gives power to suppress newspapers and to confiscate their printing plant. It is the kind of measures which an invading military commander applies to an occupied territory during war.

DO THEY KNOW ?

This is how Britain is ruling India. What do the British people think of it ? The extreme Conservatives are jubilant. At last they see the "strong hand" which they have been demanding.

"FARCE"

The moderate Conservatives, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and the Governmental Liberals are more restrained. They argue that the ordinances are necessary to crush an "unconstitutional movement"—as though any democratic movement can be "constitutional" when self-Government does not exist—and they emphasize that the Round Table Conference policy is to be continued—as though it can be anything but a farce with Mr. Gandhi in prison !

CREDENTIALS

The Liberal press is cautiously disturbed, not daring to say much in criticism, though pointing out that "force is no solution."

The Labour Party is indignant—forgetting that a Labour Government authorized the imprisonment of Mr. Gandhi and 60,000 of his followers in 1930 !

The Independent Labour Party supplements its indignation by whole-heartedly supporting India's claim to independence and by urging the Indian people to persist until social and economic freedom is won, as well as political freedom.

(*Swarajya*, Tuesday, March 22, 1932)

(b) ORDINANCES MUST GO

The saying that "the one thing you cannot do with bayonets is to sit on them" is one of the profound truths of politics in all times and places. But it is peculiarly pertinent in a case where an alien ruler is in process of transferring his authority to the people of the country. This is emphatically our case now in India.

The transference of authority from British to Indian hands is—the accepted goal of all parties in India and in England; and the very justification for the Government of India's present militant assertion of its authority is the moral duty that is incumbent on it to hand on this authority to a future Indian Raj intact.

In other words, the Ordinances are a means to an end; and they will stultify their very purpose if a too long or too rigorous application of them makes the transfer of authority more difficult.

How for example, can we justify a perpetuation of penal measures against a "Buy Indian" campaign in India when we are conducting a raging and tearing "Buy British" campaign in Britain?

What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander?

And if we give the people of India any reasonable ground for suspicion that we have taken advantage of a tactical blunder of the Congress which compelled the Government to assert itself in order to push British

trade, and maintain British rule in India with a high hand we shall be in danger of undoing the joint work of years.

Ordinances can do no more than forcibly prevent external breaches of law. They cannot compel private citizens to do business with foreign businessmen or to co-operate politically with a foreign regime. The present Ordinances in India have now done their work by repressing the overt defiance of Government authority. But they have merely driven the resistance underground. And this underground resistance—more dangerous by far than any overt acts—can only be overcome by conciliation. The moment has arrived for the Government of India to put the helm over and to sail once more on the Irwin track.

*The Economist, London.—(Swarajya, Monday
March 7, 1931.)*

(c) MISSIONARIES DENOUNCE ORDINANCE
RAJ.

We, a group of Scottish, Missionaries, serving or having served in India, at present in this country on furlough or retired, but in more or less intimate touch with India, acting in our individual capacity, desire to acquaint you with our feeling of distress over the present situation in that country.

We cordially appreciate the efforts, which the National Government are making to expedite the attainment by India of real self-government, but we are persuaded that those efforts are doomed to disappointment unless the administration abandon or greatly mitigate their present policy of government by ordinances.

We are not of one mind as to the extent to which the ordinances, introduced eight months ago were necessary for the maintenance of order. But we are all agreed that these ordinances have created bitter resentment amongst almost all classes of people, and—most ominous of all—amongst many who were previously consistently friendly in their attitude to Government.

WHAT ORDINANCES MEAN

Government by Ordinances has meant, among other things, arrest and detention in prison without trial. Such a method of administration is surrounded by many dangers and in this country would not be tolerated. In India, owing to the difficulty sometimes experienced of getting witnesses to give evidence or a jury to convict, it has been felt to be on occasion and in places, justifiable. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, leader of the Constitutional Moderates, admitted that special measures were necessary when, after referring to the "futility and folly" of the course pursued by Congress, on the one hand, and by Government, on the

other, he said :—" Government, could have carried public opinion with them if only the ordinances were not so drastic and if their administration had been conducted on more reasonable and moderate lines." But amongst possible causes of bitterness, we specially deprecate the practice which has grown up of arresting people on suspicion and at the end of a few weeks releasing them with the order to report daily at the police office and, when they fail to do so, sentencing them to one or two years' rigorous imprisonment in Class "C," which apparently means that they are placed among ordinary criminals on the lowest scale of diet. We feel that punishment of such a nature imposed, not for the offence which led to their original arrest but for failing to obey an order of the Executive, is a most undesirable method of getting such individuals placed under restraint. You will remember that in the House of Commons Major Milner and Sir Ernest Bennett gave detailed evidence of such treatment. From our knowledge of India, we are certain that what they said as to its disastrous effects is in no way exaggerated. However peaceful things may be on the surface, there is very great bitterness. There is danger, too that the severity with which the passive resistance propaganda has been put down may tend to encourage the more irresponsible sections of Indian society towards a belief in agitation of a more secret and violent nature, and thus in certain directions have the effect of increasing rather than of diminishing terrorist activity.

DESIRE TO END DEADLOCK

At the same time, there is in India a deep and widespread desire to end the present deadlock and to have negotiations opened up with a view to the renewal, if possible, of mutual trust. We believe there are elements in the Congress party, which are open to appeal and which, if their co-operation is secured, may very materially contribute to the progress of the country. We respectfully urge that renewed efforts should be made to secure their co-operation. The true prestige of British administration in India at this juncture, we believe, rests on conciliatory action.

We are grateful that the procedure announced on 27th June is to be modified and the Round Table Conference method resumed. We also note with satisfaction that the Bengal Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly are being consulted with regard to special emergency measures. But these steps, although important, are not sufficient to heal the wounds that have made. Therefore, while on the one hand, we appeal to those who have influence with Congress people to use that influence to try to bring about an understanding, we are convinced on the other hand, that the time has again come for magnanimous action on the part of the Indian Government. Such magnanimity will not be misunderstood and will we hope, help us to recover something of the goodwill so strikingly manifest at the two sessions of the Round Table Conference, and contribute to the creation of the sort of

atmosphere in which alone the new constitution will have any reasonable chance of being worked with success.

For some months, we have been working for such a change of policy as we here suggest. We hoped to see it effected without any combined public protest on our part. But, as our silence has been misunderstood, we ask you as the representatives of the Scottish people to give the facts we have submitted for your earnest consideration and to use your influence to bring about the desired change. To give the matter greater publicity, we are making this an "open letter" and sending it to the press.

(Signed)—Henry Lees Adamson, J. E. Capeland Ethel A. Gorden, Helen F. Greenfield, A. G. Henderson, Elsie G. Henry, L. A. Hogg, Norah M. Lindsay, Andrew R. Low, J. M. Macfie, Elsie L. Mackenzie, Edith M. Mackintosh, James Mackintosh, Agnes W. Maclean, John Maclean, Margaret Macnicol, N. Macnicol, R. M. Macphal, Dorothi M. P. Martin, Elsie M. Nicoll, E. Forrester Paton, Ara Rankine, Marry M. Ritchie, Camilla A. Sage, Norman W. Samrnon, Helen P. Sinclair, F. R. Sutherland, W. S. Sutherland, W. S. Tudhope and W. S. Urquhart.

(*Swarajya*, October 26, 1932.)

(d) DEEPENING THE GULF.

The Birmingham and District Council for Indian Freedom in a letter to the Editor of the "Manchester Guardian"—signed by Mr. Horrace Alexander (president) Mr. Frank Lloyd, Councillor, Mrs. Alice Longdem the Rev. W. Stanyon, Mr. J. S. Stephens and Mr. W. Wellock—protest most emphatically against the measures of repression in India, that the Government has seen fit to take.

"Suppression of the Congress removes from the sphere of negotiation the largest, most influential and most representative body in India.

"This action is bound to lead and is already leading to indignant demonstrations on the part of the general population, and under such circumstances serious clashes between the general population and the authorities must occur.

"Government by Ordinance really exposes the bankruptcy of the administration and only deepens the gulf between Government and people. Far from maintaining order, it involves the abandonment of law and fresh outbreaks of disorder.

"We are convinced that only by showing confidence in the leaders of Indian opinion and not by coercion can the present difficulties be overcome and the constitutional issue finally settled."

(*Swarajya Monday, February 8, 1932.*)

9. The Futility of Repression

(a) RISK OF LOSING TRADE:

COSGRAVE'S SUPPORTERS.

At the general meeting of the Party held at the Gresham Hotel (writes the Dublin Correspondent of the " Bombay Chronicle ") it was said : " Repression has not subdued Indian nationalism. Least of all has it served the turn of English industry. Nothing has been gained ; much has been lost and this must go on until the people of England learn that truculent politicians do more harm than good to England's own interests. The Jail gates closed on Indian freedom are closed on English factories.

(*Swarajya, Wednesday, April 27, 1932.*)

(b) CANNOT SUPPRESS A NATION

What case is there in the whole course of history of a national movement yielding, for any considerable time, of repression ?

It is absurd to talk as though the Indian problem is how to put down a mutiny. We are confronted with a national movement such as we had to face in Ireland and Egypt and we shall have, sooner or later, to give way now, as we did then, for the simple reason that we cannot afford the cost, even if we had the stomach, for governing by the sword.

We must keep order, but if, in the next few months, we can make no progress in coming to terms with the Indians, then, in our own interests, we had better give ourselves notice to quit.—(*The New Statesman, London.*)
(*Swarajya, January, 13, 1932.*)

(c) COERCION NO PERMANENT SOLUTION.

MR. LANSBURY, M. P.

Speaking at a meeting in London, Mr. Lansbury said that it was a disaster of the first magnitude that Gandhiji was in prison and the Congress banned, "Coercion might win for a time, but it would fail as a permanent solution. If Britain could only rule India by the sword, we should come away for sure as fate the sword would break in our hands and bring us to ruin. The fact that the Viceroy had said that Britain's position could only be maintained by Martial Law, was of itself the worst condemnation of our 70 years' rule. If that is so, it would be better for Britain and for India that we acknowledged the failure and came away. On the other hand, if we abandoned coercion and honestly worked with the Indian nationalists to frame a new Indian Government, we would not merely bring peace and prosperity to India but trade and commerce to Britain." It was an impossible task to endeavour to suppress the aspirations of a nation of 300 millions.—
(*Swarajya, Thursday, January 7, 1932.*)

(d) FORCE NO REMEDY

MR. WILFRED WELLOCK

“The situation has become such that no self-respecting person can any longer remain silent. The nauseating persecution now in operation is not only revolting but is reflecting upon our national honour. Our duty is clearly to confess our own failure and ask India to take charge and see whether she cannot succeed where we have failed. Mr. Gandhi has led India into an alternative path to that of war in resisting what she believed to be an evil. Who dare say he or the other Indian leaders could not discover better methods of social and economic organisation than we have adopted and are trying to force upon India?”

(Swarajya, Tuesday, May 24, 1932.)

CHAPTER V

APPEALS TO END REPRESSION

1. Mr. Bertrand Russell :

Mr. Bertrand Russel, Chairman of the India League, London issued the following appeal to the British public :—

ERA OF REPRESSION

A new era of intensified repression has put an end to the period of conciliatory gestures on the part of the British Government. No sane man supposes that the repression can succeed and no decent person who knows the facts supposes that it can be justified. But the great majority of English people are in ignorance of the facts : If they could be made aware of them, I cannot but think that they would shrink from the cruelties and disasters that are inevitable if the present policy is persisted in. It is therefore of vital importance that the British people should know what is being done in their name in India.

SHAMEFUL AND FOOLISH

Our Government is behaving in a manner at once shameful and incredibly foolish. We cannot, and I think a great many people in this country will agree with me, sit still and thus assume responsibility for the

acts of the Government. We must dissociate ourselves from the suppression of India.

We must actively protest against the Government's policy and support the Indian people in every possible way in their struggle for liberty. India should know and the world should know that the Government of this country and the authorities in India do not have the moral support of British public opinion in their mad course of coercion.

A RIDICULOUS IDEA

The idea of trying to arrive at a settlement when those who can speak in the name of the country are locked up in prison is ridiculous. India will get what she wants by her own efforts in the long run. But if it comes as a result of force and not out of a sense of justice on our side, it is a tragedy. It is disguising to think that we shall yield to force and not to reason. I do not see that our Government has the strength to impose any sense of decency or toleration on the officials in India.

"OUR DUTY"

Our duty—one which all of us who are British have—is to devote ourselves actively to seeing that the acts of our Government are not our acts. By being indifferent or merely passively sympathetic we become parties to the cruelties and the aggressive policies pursued in India by the British authorities. The repression

that is pursued in India is severe even in the History of that country.

I appeal to all men and women, whatever their political faith in matters of domestic concern, to join us in the fight against the coercion of a people. The defence of liberty is the duty of all decent people.

(*Swarajya*, Friday, April 22, 1932.)

2. Rev. C. F. Andrews :

" I'm a man of religion, a peace-maker, and in no sense a politician. But in India just now it is vital for Christians to come in and make their position on the deadlock clear, and their influence with the British Government felt." With these words Rev. C.F. Andrews concluded his interview to a special representative of the " Methodist Times," London, in course of which he put forward a vigorous plea for reconciliation between the Indian National Government, says a report in " Liberty. "

Continuing he said " I met Mr. Gandhi first of all as far back as 1931 and on arriving in February I asked the Indian Government to let me see him. But I was refused, as was also Mr. Sastri. You see the Government of India has taken up the attitude that there must be no overtures for peace between them and the Congress.

“When I had been there some time and the people of all classes came to me, I found the situation not at all what Sir Samuel Hoare depicts it in Parliament. He is taking much too rosy a view and makes too light of the people’s sufferings—much too light. The people as a whole, who never take any part in politics, are full of resentment at the repression that takes place for almost no offence whatever, under the Emergency Ordinance. And even though they don’t belong to the Congress party they very much resent the attempts to crush it. Here’s an example what I mean. One of India’s Christians, an old pupil of mine, who was over here trained at Ridley Hall, the Theological College at Cambridge of the Evangelicals, an ordinary missionary, said to me:—I have never taken any part in politics, but I can’t bear to see the things that are being done by the Police. These things make me lose all moral respect for the Government. He is a non-party and, so to speak, quiet and peaceful and without any political tendencies, ‘We are all in sympathy with the Congress to-day, he added,’ because we feel it is being persecuted.”

“The question is,” went on Mr. C. F. Andrews “which is implacable, the Congress or the Government? There is nearly a state of war, or a condition of war spirit.”

“We ought never to refuse to negotiate; never refuse the hand of reconciliation that is the vital point. We Christians are taught the “Sermon on the Mount”

that we must try and try again to be reconciled. It is very serious. At present, unless the other side, the Congress side, come to us and offer to surrender, we won't negotiate. This is wrong. Because the Government of India knew I should go to Gandhi as a messenger of peace, they refused me permission to see him."

(Swarajya, Monday, July 11, 1932.)

3. M. Romain Rolland:

M. Romain Rolland, writing to an English correspondent, says: "From the universal point of view, I regard the present Indian crisis as going much beyond the question of a political conflict between the British Empire and India. In the eyes of millions who regard as intolerable the continuance of society as it is now organised and who have resolved to change it Mr. Gandhi's Satyagraha experiment is the sole chance now existing in the world of effecting this transformation of humanity without resort to violence. If this attempt fails there will remain no other issue in human history but violence. This is why all those who have at heart the social harmony and spirit of peace should help India with all their strength."

(The Hindu, Tuesday, February 9, 1932)

4. Dr. Privat :

At a largely attended meeting at White fields Mission, London Dr. Privat repeated the striking description of his Indian experiences. The effect of the narrative was enhanced by the speaker's obvious desire to be fair to the Government whose view point he clearly stated, but the audience was greatly distressed by the details of the police methods which he confessed had spoilt his good impression of British civilisation. Nothing was more surely manufacturing enemies to the British rule than the present repression. He found a large volume of Moslem opinion favourable to the Congress while the Moderates had little following. He regretted the moral discredit Britain must suffer abroad when the facts became known. He still hoped that the British genius for organisation and negotiation would be capable of finding a better solution than force against a movement which was mainly non-violent. It would be better to make concessions now with good grace than be compelled to do so later when the position in India might become similar or worse than Ireland.

(The Hindu, Friday April 15, 1932)

5. Father Verrier Elwin :

On May 27th I came down from my jungle retreat to Bombay, intending to go to England as soon as I could in order to tell people something of what was happening here. With this end in view I began visiting and talking with as many friends as I could—not only Congress workers, but businessmen (Indian and English) Missionaries, Parsees, Muslims, workers among the untouchables, and members of the 'Liberal Party,' I stayed a week at the 'Servants of India Society' in Poona, the centre of the 'Co-operating' section of Indian politicians. But now I have had to cancel my proposed journey since Government would only allow me a passport to England, but would not extend it so as to permit me to return. I am too wedded to India and the poor of India to risk a possibly long exile from the work which I have most at heart. And so I am staying on here but I thought, I should at least get down on paper some of the impressions that I will not now be able to give you in person.

WHAT THE OFFICIALS THINK

Has the Government's repressive policy succeeded? I remember a high official saying to me last January, 'We are out to smash the Congress to bits, to discredit it, ruin it, so that it will never lift up its head again.' But far from discrediting Congress, Government itself has been the chief contributor to its growing prestige

for you only set a romantic halo about any popular movement if you put it in jail. Government has crushed many—but not all—of the outward demonstrations of political life in the country. There are none of the almost epic features which have marked previous Satyagraha campaigns. The repression has been ruthless and complete. Congress may not have succeeded in paralysing the administration—but it has succeeded in disturbing the morale and conscience of the Government. For what can be more deeply impressive to the imagination than the dignity of the silent suffering of the tens of thousands behind prison bars. This is the real ‘offensive’ of the Congress—this harmless, voiceless offering of pain and deprivation for the conversion of England.

SUFFERINGS OF PRISONERS

For let there be no mistake about the sufferings of the prisoners. A Deputy-Commissioner said to me the other day, ‘Whatever we may say, this jail life is a very severe experience for cultured or well-to-do people.’ The health of many of India’s noblest and greatest is being affected, Pandit Jawaharlal has constant fever; Seth Jamnalal Bajaj is fighting a growing weakness in the rigours of the ‘C’ class; Mrs. Jamnalal has been very ill. Most tragic of all is the thought that the few precious years’ remaining of the Mahatma’s own life are being lost to the world. The one man who could

bring peace ; the one man who, as an Indian Editor said to me, can get the British forgiven by the India they have wronged ; the only man who can deliver the goods in the spheres alike of politics or of social reconstruction, is silenced.

BRITAIN'S PRESTIGE SUNK LOW

A third point is one which it is very painful for an Englishman to have to make. Never has the prestige of Britain sunk so low as during the last few months. On this point there is universal agreement. 'No one now trusts an Englishman' said a leading Liberal to me the other day. 'England's reputation for justice, and fairplay has totally collapsed,' remarked another. 'England has now thrown off all pretence of being a Christian nation,' said a third. There can hardly be a greater humiliation than to be an Englishman in India to-day. The methods used to crush the Congress—the inequalities of our justice, the almost unbelievable pettiness of our dealings, the brutalities of our police and prison administration have shaken the faith of even our most staunch admirers. I am a great lover of my country, and it is unnecessary to write these things ; but it is necessary that you should know how you are being betrayed by your fellow-country men in India. Into the interests of big business and of bureaucratic prestige, the name of England—the fair name of liberty and honour—is being dragged in the dust.

IF ONLY THEY KNEW

I believe in the conscience of my people. I believe that if the people of England realised what was being done in their name in India, they would demand in the cause of truth and honour an immediate reversal of the present policy of the India Office, and the exposure of those who have encouraged communal hatred in an attempt to discredit India in the eyes of the world. They would also insist on the abandonment of brute force for the suppression of a non-violent and peaceful political movement. Where the whole world is turning in disgust from the methods of force to those of conciliation and arbitration, England is going back on the progress of civilisation.

BREAKING FRIENDLINESS

The wife of an Indian Christian Principal of a Missionary College said to me the other day 'What is the use of English people coming to India to preach Christianity when their country is violating every principle of the Gospel in its dealings with us? India cannot hear the words of the Gospel of Christ for the noise of the lathi blows and the clank of prison fetters: the deeds of a 'Christian' nation speak louder than its words.

How unlovely our rule appears in India to-day! We are indeed crushing and maiming something for

more valuable and important than India's national consciousness; we are breaking a friendliness which we need and which should be ours, a patience which has borne much but cannot endure for-ever.

(Swarajya, Tuesday, June 14, 1932.)

CHAPTER VI

APPEALS TO CHRISTIANS

1. Rev. J. H. Edwards :

We have good reason for believing that a large number of missionaries feel like ourselves in being torn between respect for law and order and a keen desire to meet India's wishes as far as these can be ascertained. It is certain that many missionaries are doing what they can, to help the situation which is so desperate and full of danger. Never, in our opinion, was the alienation between Government and the majority of educated people in India so nearly complete as it is at the present moment. The very calmness with which the series of ordinances has been received, as compared with the outbreak of violence in several places in 1919, is itself disquieting, because it is in danger of giving the impression to the Government that their swift and intensive methods of justice have succeeded, and because there is so much evidence that the alienation lies deep in the minds of people who are not speaking for fear of being suspected. We submit that it is a humiliation to Christendom that even on such a grave question we cannot deal with a man of Gandhiji's moral dimensions without putting him behind prison bars.

(Swarajya, Wednesday, May 21, 1932.)

2. G. B. Holsted:

The Indian Struggle for Independence is fundamentally based on deep, underlying moral issues which are held vital by all men and women everywhere who love and desire truth, beauty and goodness, and long to see these values firmly established as the basis of all relationships between man and woman.

Clouded as it has been by economic, social and political "smoke screens," laid down by institutions or persons with vested interests, the supreme moral issue for the Indian struggle has been obscured. Where or what is the Moral Principle or justification for any nation in this modern world to continue to hold any other peoples in bondage, no matter how beneficial or paternal that bondage may be, when the Moral Judgment of the citizens of those nations demands freedom and release? No opinion on the present struggle dare be voiced, no judgment formed, which has not met squarely and fairly and answered satisfactorily this fundamental moral issue. Upon the right of every nation in the modern world to express and develop itself to its highest and greatest cultural, spiritual, economic, social and political capacities, depends in great measure the prosperity, integrity and stability of the world to-day and the world to-morrow. That India has not that right is clear to all whose eyes have not been blinded by false and superficial issues.

Missionaries and Christians, I call you to battle in the name of the Christ you love—in the name of the India you desire to serve—in the name of the freedom that God wishes for all His Sons and Daughters everywhere.

(“*The Indian Social Reformer*.”—*Swarajya* 20, 1932)

3. Father Verrier Elwin :

If ever there was a time and place where Christian intervention was demanded in the interests of peace it is in India to-day. The contest between the Government of India and the Indian National Congress has reached a deadlock. Government has been able to hold the Disobedience movement in check; it has been unable to crush it. The Congress is not the whole of India, but it is the progressive and heroic vanguard of India and no campaign of repression will be able to crush it. On the other hand, while the Congress has won new prestige and influence throughout the whole of India, it has succeeded neither in seriously embarrassing the Government nor in changing the hearts of people in Britain.

VOID WIDENS

Both in England in India there are signs of a deep far-reaching alienation. A leading article in “*The Yorkshire Post*” of August 12 points out that

"There can be no doubt that opinion in England is hardening. Mr. Gandhi's revival of Civil Disobedience has evoked not a shadow of sympathy in this country. Last December, Mr. Ramsay Mac Donald was able to secure the sanction of a united Government to the new reforms. But if opinion hardens still more can he continue to rely on a parliamentary majority?" In India the alienation and hostility has grown intensely during the last six months. There is a lack of faith in British promises and in British justice. The administration of the Ordinances has roused acute opposition even among the most cautious Indian politicians. Many of the alleged "atrocities" are undoubtedly simply propaganda, and I know that the higher British officials are sincerely anxious to prevent them.

NO PARALLEL

But when all allowance has been made for exaggeration there remains a very considerable body of evidence to show that the Ordinances have resulted in real injustice.

It is essential for the interests of both India and England that this miserable situation should not last a day longer. At the moment every one in India is losing heavily. In such an atmosphere of all-round suspicion and antagonism no great experiment in nation-building can be possible. I myself believe that the Congress have everything to gain from a settlement.

In my "Truth about India" I have defended the starting of the Civil Disobedience Movement last January. It was in view of the psychological atmosphere then prevailing, inevitable. But to-day it ought to be possible for a great Christian nation to create an atmosphere in which peace is equally inevitable.

The problem is one of psychology. It is obviously impossible for the Congress to make the first move. It was hard enough for the Mahatma to induce his followers to accept his pact with Lord Irwin—that triumph of Christian statesmanship. It will be far harder now. A "surrender" on the Mahatma's part would lead without any doubt whatever to an all-India terrorist movement. The first move must come from our side. What is needed is a change of tone, a new atmosphere a return to the Irwin policy of negotiation and conciliation. There must be no more talk of our not being content with a drawn battle. At the first real signs of what he calls a "change of heart" I believe the Mahatma would be ready for peace. He returned to India anxious to co-operate in the final deliberations over the new constitution. He was ready to use his great influence in fighting the terrorist movement. He is not an easy person to negotiate with. It involves a certain swallowing of Imperialistic pride for Government to negotiate with him at all. But he must be negotiated with sooner or later. Whether we like it or not, he is vital to the success of the new constitution.

CHRISTIAN NATION ON TRIAL.

And can anyone doubt that it is the duty of a Christian nation to make the first advance towards peace? Is the teaching of the Gospel out of date as a standard for our dealings with India to-day? Why should we take the line that we cannot negotiate with people who show no signs of wishing to co-operate with us? It is no solution to shut such people in prison: we must persuade them: we cannot coerce them. Jesus Christ taught that his followers were to forgive men their trespasses, that they were not to stand on their dignity, and that in any quarrel they were to take the initiative for friendliness and peace. He emphasised the fact that an adventure in generosity brings good measure in return. And surely a great Empire can afford to be generous towards an opponent so chivalrous as Mahatma Gandhi.

BITTER MEMORIES.

But if a settlement is for the moment out of the question, then the Christian forces of Britain should urge that the campaign of repression in India should be carried on with hands that are scrupulously clean. Our justice should be above reproach. There should be no cruelty towards defenceless and non-violent political demonstrators. Newman once defined a gentleman as one who behaves to his enemies as if they were one

day to be his friends. If the Ordinances are administered in the spirit of Christian gentlemen there will not be the bitter memories left behind with which we are threatened. There are a few things which should be rectified immediately which are causing a great deal of unnecessary bitterness and hostility.

WILL ENGLAND RESPOND ?

Mahatma Gandhi and his followers are making an appeal to the chivalry and courtesy of the English people. They are trying the way of non-violent resistance instead of that of hatred and revenge. I do not pretend that their movement is free of faults and free of danger. But the greatest among the Indian nationalists are fighting us with clean hands and pure weapons. Surely it is not too much to ask that England should respond in the same spirit. It is no answer to point to the faults of the Congress. Let England trust her "enemies" as if they were one day to be her friends and then when these unhappy days are over, we shall find that India is a friend indeed.

"The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you." There are thousands of hearts wounded in India to-day because we have not followed this saying of the Master. There are thousands who are resentful, angry, alienated. We may say that it is unreasonable that it should be

so, but it is so. Are we to wait in pride for them to make us offers of surrender, or is it not nearer to the mind of Christ that we should regain their love and confidence by an adventure of generosity? "Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called the children of God."

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